

Christ praying in y^e Garden. Lu. 22



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**Mid-night
THOUGHTS.**

Writ, as some think, by a
London - Whigg,
OR, A
Westminster - Tory.

Others think by a
QUAKER,
OR, A
JESUIT.

But call him what they please,
they may find him a true
PENITENT
Of the
Church of CHRIST.

London, Printed for Benj. Clark, Bookseller, in
George-Yard in Lombard-street, 1682.

THe Constant Meditations
of a Man who for many
years built on Sand, which
every blast of cross Fortune
has defaced. But now he has
laid new Foundations on the
Rock of his Salvation, which
no Storms can shake; and will
out-last the Conflagration of
the World, when time shall
melt into Eternity.

PRINTED

BY

JOHN B. ALLEN, at the Press of
JOHN B. ALLEN, in the City of New York.

TO THE READER.

YOU are to know, that the Author
(being no Scholar) had no design
to teach others, nor other Aim
by writing these his Mid-night Thoughts,
then by reviewing them, to keep up his own
heart to Heaven: But by this practice, he
grew to such a habit of Nightly Meditations,
(at his first waking) as prov'd more plea-
sant then sleep, and in a short time became
more delightful, then any other Thoughts
could entertain his mind with: So that with-
out any intent to publish them, they swell'd
into this bulk you see; and brought him such
consolation, that he thought it Gods Mercy
to bring him this way to Heaven. And if
any Reader do find the like advantage, by
doing the like, he will have as much cause
to thank God as the Author has, who set his
fancy on work this way, to defend his heart
from indulging such vain Thoughts, as day
and night did formerly invade and seduce
him unto evil purposes.

To the Reader.

And on this account, the Author was perswaded by some Friends, to transcribe these loose Papers as they were first writ, and racked together, without any method of coherence observed; (as appears by the frequent repetitions of the same expressions in many of them;) yet they wish'd him to keep them as they were, to shew how such unlearned men as himself, might better employ their busie fancies at all times, on the serious thoughts of their Eternity, then to drop into their Graves, without any consideration whither they are going. And the Author on the same account, was some time after by the same Friends, (against his own Judgment) over-ruled and perswaded to permit them to be Printed, (without his Name) who gave him such Arguments for it, as he could not resist, hoping that amongst so much sincere natural Devotion, something of great use may be found to enrich the Souls of those, who are of no more capacity then himself, who knew no true felicity, until he learnt to meditate on his Eternity, which every man has some Talents to practice on.

Mid-night THOUGHTS.

I.

Most men do miss of the Felicity they seek on Earth, because the Wealth and Honours that we gain, and all our joys in them, are with our selves still perishing in the height of our Fruitions; and in a little time must all return unto the dust we came from: Yet nothing does disturb the heart of man so often, and so much, as pampering of it with hopes of what we seldom reach, and always over-valuing what we aim at, which our Fancies like Magnifying Glasses represent unto us, with such multiplied Felicities, as dazle our understanding, and captivate our reason with an expectation of what we never find. But such men as can set their hearts on God, (above all his creatures) and delight in him, and his Celestial joys, will find a constant Felicity here, by an inward assurance of Eternal Glory here.

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after

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after; for such a man can never want arguments to encrease his joys on earth, when his repeated sorrows for past sins do create new joys for those sorrows; and every new victory over a new temptation does afford him fresh joys for such frequent conquests over Satan and himself. So that if we can set our whole hearts sincerely to delight in God, and his service, *We may have so many tastes of his Heavenly joys here, and such frequent glimpses of that glory,* that we cannot hide our comforts in the Holy Ghost from our own hearts while we live, and when we die, our Souls will rejoyce to fly into Christs arms, for the consummation of all our hopes, all our joys unto Eternity. And whoever doth observe, will find that the deepest sorrows for sin, does raise the highest joys for our reconciliation, and will prove our fullest happiness on earth.

II.

THe more we search into the ways of Devotion, the clearer we shall see, and experimentally find, that true Divine Philosophy, when fixed in the heart of a Divine Lover, is the highest extract of all
the

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the blessedness that mans nature is capable of in this world: For God may be said to delight in filling those Souls with his Celestial joys, that study him, and will bring a regenerate man to such a sense, and contempt of his past life, that he shall soon arrive at so great a degree of Felicity in his approaches, and converse with him in Holy Meditations, as to lament when he thinks of what joys he has lost, by wandering so long from God. For the felicity to love God, and to be beloved of God, is a pleasant Meditation to entertain a pious mans heart his whole life; *And will invite him to spend more time with God, then with all his creatures.*

III.

WE should always pray with such intention of Spirit in that great duty unto God, and with such fervent zeal, as if our Souls were that moment to expire, and to carry our Pardon with us to Heaven. And every time that we receive the Holy Sacrament, we should consider, that we are climbing a step nearer to Heaven then we were before, so to shew our desires to be there. And whoever will

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have patience to read these plain Lessons, and mind them so seriously as to practice them sincerely, will find more pleasure therein, then he can fancy before he tries, (if he never tried to Meditate till now,) because a firm, fixed, ratified Devotion, has in all Ages been experimentally approved of, for the highest delightful diversion, that the heart of man can enjoy.

IV.

Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee thy hearts desire; that thou maist still increase that delight more and more in his mercies and blessings, in his love; and thy trust therein, with a comfortable peace of Conscience, until he brings thee unto the supream delight of all delights, to see his face in Glory; and until then, to entertain thy heart with the joyful assurance of that Felicity to come, as the highest desire a man can have, by continual improving thy delight in God; for from him who is the Fountain of Mercy, and Grace, continual joys do flow.

We

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V.

WE are to seek earnestly; and to pray daily for Christs righteousness as our chief treasure, and not to rest until our hearts be enriched with some portion thereof, to carry us to heaven, and in our way thither, so to arm us here, that no approaching evils may divert us. We are also to consider, that the Gospel does not invite us to forsake the pleasures of this World, to go into a Dungeon, (which were a hard lesson) but to remove from hence to inhabit Heaven, with all its glory to Eternity; yet this natural cowardly disease of fearing to die, being born with us, is without cure, *until the Holy Ghost do fall so on us, and dwell so in us,* as to overcome our frailty by his grace, and to make us see, and understand how to value our Interest in Heaven on Christs account; and by that faith, to raise in us such holy courage, as to pass through the Grave with joy to our Eternal Bliss; which requires a Divine valour, beyond the reach of a Natural mans fancy, with assistance from above.

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VI.

Most men do forget that our greatest affair on Earth, is to serve God frequently, diligently, and *publicly to own him*; in the first place to secure our blessed Eternity by his favour, while we have time to do it: And in the second place, to follow our Callings for a Subsistence, by his providence prospering our labour during our abode here: But we do often invert this, by doing quite contrary all our Lives; by hungering and thirsting after perishing Goods, and *serving God at spare times only*, as our least concern; until the Agonies of a Death-bed shews our mistake too late. For it is a great presumption to neglect God all our days, and expect a Crown of Glory at our last gasp, as a reward for our neglect; it is dangerous to provoke God so.

VII.

IF we did set our hearts to take pleasure in Piety, as we do to improve our delight in other things, we should find that Heaven Gates would fly open to our sincere

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ere addresses, and perceived the Spirit of God working in our hearts, with Divine transports full of unexpressible joys, while that Sacred flame burns bright within us; And such Emanations from the Holy Ghost, are the greatest invitations we can have, to encourage us to prepare for a place in Heaven, and to make us esteem those Celestial joys, above all the glories of this world, where the greatest Princes terminate their highest ambition to die the Sons of God, (or should do so.)

VIII.

WHat God hath revealed to us at Mid-night alone, shall be our portions in the next World: And if we can repeat the same Communication with joy in the day-time, which we had with Christ in the night, we may entertain a comfortable assurance that the Holy Ghost was at first, and is at last enkindling those Divine flames within us, to raise our elevated transported Souls to Heaven.

The

IX.

THe greatest Epicure cannot have so much pleasure in satisfying all his Appetites, as a regenerate man has in *his conversation with God*, during his devout Addresses, in which he finds the *Holy Ghost* raising up his heart to an assurance of his favour with God, and giving his Soul a delight far above all Carnal fruitions, by the *very victory* over them. But this is only intelligible by Pious hearts, and requires a Divine Valour to encounter, and overcome in such skirmishes with Satan, and to relish the Felicity and Glory of such triumphant joys as follow every such victory.

X.

IF we consider that God asks nothing of man for all his benefits bestowed (*but the heart of man*) and that nothing but man can give the heart to God, and that we ever heard, nor read of any man, that ever made, that sincere Present to God, but did receive it back infinitely enlightned, and enriched with treasures of never fading

ding blessedness; who then can believe this, and omit to make so advantageous a Present of his whole heart unto God? To shew his Faith, his Love and Obedience, as his greatest happiness on Earth. For we may in a way of speaking (and I hope without offence) suppose the heart of man was made Triangular, as three Seats, for God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are all one God, as the three Corners are one Heart, which can no more be divided, than the Godhead, *Who will so fill it when he dwells therein*, as to leave no place for the World, the Flesh, or the Devil, to abide there: And from hence it is, that God forsakes us, when we forsake him; *When we deliver up his Habitation in our hearts unto his enemies*, when we thrust him out, to admit of any of those Rivals into any corner of our hearts, we then affront the whole Trinity, (and drive away all them, all him) to entertain and court a destroying Guest, instead of the Lord of Life.

XI.

God will not suffer those that are his to live in the dark; for if God be with us, he will make us see that he is with

with us, and will never go out of our sight, until he has brought us where we shall never go out of his, and will sometimes make us start with a surprizing joy, to find he is so near us, as to give our hearts a taste of the same joy we shall have in Heaven, though infinitely increased then, and superinvested with Glory. How great comfort then must this be, when long habitual sinners are thus Blessed, thus Converted, and thus reconciled to God, by faith in Christ's blood, when God does so eminently manifest his glorious goodness, in visiting the Souls of sinners, and powerfully calling us great Criminals, to become chosen Vessels, where himself vouchsafes to dwell? To think fully of this, is to think of nothing else in comparison of this our great concern, which now begins, and now assures our Eternity with God, which is above all earthly Felicities that pass away like Dreams. (As) what signifies the Persian, Grecian, or the Roman Empires now? Where are those Great, Glorious, Glistering Bubbles now? Never worthy to come into competition with the higher aims of regenerate men indued with Divine love, whose Immortal Souls are fed with such Celestial joys, as can only flow from

from their Immortal object, (God) on whom their ambitious hearts are fixed with such a lively Faith, as doth create a contempt of all earthly Fruitions, and stand ever ready as adopted Sons of God, with joy to pass through the Grave, to an immediate possession of a Crown of Glory; for when God is pleased *so to descend and dwell with us here*, it is to assure our Souls they shall ascend, and dwell with him in Heaven.

XII.

HE that has heard the Bell Toll for him to the Grave, and lives after it, will do well to call to mind what Agonies he then felt, and what Vows he then made to God on his Recovery; and now every day to examine his heart, how well he has performed those Vows, and how much fitter he now is for his next Summons thither: For every Bell that he hears now Toll for others, is his Alarm to make ready for his day of Judgment. A concern so great, that no man can guess at the terrible terrors of a dying, despairing sinner, but he that has felt them; nor can any man know the Felicity of living ever ready to

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to die, but he to whom God has given the grace to live so, and to accustom himself to compare frequently those past amazing terrors of despair (from which God did then deliver him,) with such new light by grace from above, as will exalt his Soul out of those dark despairing clouds, to expire in a full reconciliation to God at his last hour.

XIII.

IF we believe Christ on earth did all those Miracles the Gospel mentions, and that by Faith so many of all sorts were healed of their Infirmities, the same faith now no doubt will procure the like mercies from the same Christ, now he is ascended, and united unto God the Father, where he sees all our Maladies, and hears our Cries, and is as ready now to Cure our Leprous Souls, our Withered Limbs, our Bloody Issues, and to cast out as many Legions of Devils that possess us with Pride, Envy, Lust, Revenge, Gluttony, Avarice, and all the rest of that black train: So that if we be now as desirous to be Cured as they were then, and do cry out for Mercy as they did, we shall be made whole like them, and follow Christ for

for ever after, until we enter into his Eternal Rest.

XIV.

IF we observe how the Holy Ghost works on our Souls, when our sincere devotions do raise our hearts to Heaven, and how much our fancy soars above our own reach in Extasies of joy, and Celestial delight at that time, we may thereby know how God accepts such Sacrifices, and by his returns of comfort, find ardent desires to repeat such addresses, as often as our affection and felicity does encrease by our devotion; for then God meets our sincere prayers with such consolations, and inward dependance on his mercy and grace, *as will enlighten our hearts with divine love, and bring us to a constant conversation with him, by living a divine life;* So to wean us from the World, and fill us with such Holy flames from Heaven, as nothing shall shake our faith, nor divert our thoughts from making ready for our journey thither. But 'tis neither writing thus, nor talking thus, nor praying thus, but doing thus, must bring us thither.

X V.

IT were well if we did treat God with as much respect as we give to one another; for men generally (when invited to a great man's house) in common civility do dress themselves to their best advantage, suitable to such Company, and fit for such respect and welcom, as they expect there: How much more ought we to prepare and adorn our Soule and Bodies, when we are invited by the glorious Majesty of God unto Heaven, and by his Holy Spirit are daily solicited to come, where we are sure to be received and welcomed by his Son our Saviour, and all the Host of Heaven, with Divine Carelles, suitable to the dress we appear in; and what we want of that innocent whiteness, we shall find the Angels adorned with there, his Son will make up, by covering us all over with his bright Rayment of Celestial purity. So then, such men whose hearts are ambitious of that Ornament, and that Honour, *will prepare for it before they go, and then will not miss of being so arrayed when they come thither;* So that our sincerity in making ready,

ready, is our work here, as it is Christ's work to own us there, and is also (in a great measure) the business of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all three as one, to encourage and contribute to assist us in our desires and endeavours towards this Holy dressing, for our blessed reception into Heaven; and our whole lives are given us here, for time to make ready to enter into that Eternal Glory at the Resurrection. Let no man then, who has faith in Christ's Blood, afflict himself with doubts, or fears, that he knows not how to serve God acceptably; for God sees through the hearts of men, and observes such as are set humbly, and sincerely to love, fear, and obey him; *unto such he will send his Holy Spirit to fill their Souls with his guiding Light, so fully as they cannot miss their way to Heaven.*

XVI.

IF we consider the Soul of man as an Extract of the Divine nature, we may well think that true devotion is the highest Epicurism we are capable of in this World, where we may make Evangelical

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Righteousness our superlative delight, and by it express our gratitude to God, in raising our hearts to Divine love of Him; So to manifest our high and glorious extraction, by a constant joyful conversation with God in humble Addresses; and so fix our election as the consummation of God's prime purpose to adorn his best Creature (Man) with his greatest blessings; for nothing can be greater than to give himself (as He always doth) unto those who desire him, in whom they have all that Heaven and Earth contains.

XVII.

WE are to seek God, and not to leave seeking till we find him, and we may be sure to find him, who desires to be found by those that seek him as they ought, and delights to be so sought, that we may be sure we have found him, that is, when we delight in him, more than in all his Creatures; So *we do not deceive our selves by mistaking our delight in God, but are pleased with all his methods, in weaning us from the uncertain glories of this perishing World,* that

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that our Souls may be ever soaring up to Him, when we have found him, so as not to lose him again. But we too often meet with men who have skill to make the World believe they have found God, and do enjoy him above others, and are full of Divine joys in shew, from their dissembled Piety professed, so to obtain credit and trust to deceive the Innocent (which when gained) they soon unmasque themselves to act as they designed: And then, how vast a difference is seen between such, and a truly Regenerate man, that has found God indeed, and does converse with his Great Maker in full tranquility of Soul, through the expectation of his joyful Resurrection from the grave! while the Hypocrite has an aking heart in the midst of all his joys, and all his hopes; *that fears to find God too soon, whom he never had a thought to seek.*

XVII.

THe Divine Lover, who is accustomed to converse with God at midnight, will then, at first waking, find his heart so full of fervent zeal, so glowing

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Not, that no sleepiness can suppress those devout flames from soaring up towards Heaven, where his Soul enjoys those refreshing comforts it is used to find from the kind welcomes of his beloved, while that holy flame lasts, and when his Soul descends from this early visit, it retains the *Idea* of that delight the whole day after, still exciting this Divine Lover to retire, and repeat those Celestial joys, as the highest, and most delightful entertainment he can wish for on this side of Heaven! for God is the *Centre* of a Divine Lovers Soul, it cannot move from him without some impulsive force, which we should disdain to yield unto.

XIX.

How frail is humane Nature! that can never be so much pleased on Earth, as (within some time) not to become weary of what we most delight in: And how much greater frailty is it to know how to be ever pleased, and for ever happy! but cannot set our hearts sincerely to endeavour for it. And yet there is another frailty in some men above all the rest most wonderful! that
such

such as have, on serious thoughts of their Eternity, resigned their hearts to God, and, for some time, known no joy, like their transports for Heaven; that such men, so raised, should prove so weakly fixed! as boldly dare make room for Satan in their hearts again (as the more welcome guest) *where God did sometime dwell*; this were a dreadful thing to think on; if the mercies of God were not far beyond the reach of sinners to deface. And from hence we may learn, that *holiness is the peculiar gift of God*, and that we are raised to all degrees of Piety by his holy Spirit, who of our selves can neither rise nor stand one moment in his favour longer than supported by the same Spirit, thus to give us humble thoughts of our own little or no strength. And yet we are not obliged to rest in such humility, but ought to labour, and to pray for more and more Talents of faith and grace, till their increase do raise our Souls higher and higher, in ambitious zeal to become Divine Lovers, and not to be content with less preferment than *adopted Sons*, *when we find the Holy Ghost thus at work within us*; and so may strive to raise our new affections

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affections, by holy thoughts, to the highest pitch of devout extasies of Devotion, and by this Divine experiment to try if we can love God too much, and have more zeal in prayer, than he does like of! or can so tire him with our importunate addresles, that He will turn away his face, and deny his love unto Souls wholly devoted to serve and please him. But when we find our hearts full of such sincere raptures in Devotion, we may assure our selves they come from God, who does ever approve and accept of such flaming sacrificed hearts, as are enkindled from above, and are much different from any such Enthusiams as Satan can infuse, only to infect those wavering hearts, that do still incline to be his Vassals.

XX.

THose who have obtained of God to become truly Regenerate, do find that a sincere repentance, with contrition and conversion of heart to God, are rewarded with peace of Conscience, and so great a delight in humble converse with God, on their meditations of Heaven,

Heaven, and their Eternal bliss, that all Worldly pleasures do give way to those Divine transports, *which flow from the Holy Ghost within them.* And no time so proper to meet God, as when they awake at mid-night, before any Worldly concerns entertain their hearts; for he that chearfully recommends his Soul to God, when he lyes down to rest, will to his infinite comfort, find God ready to receive his first waking ejaculations, who begins the day with the same adoration, and trusts in him, that he lay down to sleep with: so that our mid-night conferences with God, will by custom grow more pleasant than sleep, and will fix such a Divine love on our Creator, as will produce great joy here, and some glimpse of that glory we shall have in Heaven: for God never receives our sincere Addresses, without multiplying of his favours in return by such manifestations of his grace, as will preserve us in his service until we meet again, to pursue those holy meditations, which will bring us unto Him in Heaven, when we die.

XXI.

A Righteous man is a Divine Philosopher, that enjoys all his heart can wish in this World, by his faith in Christ, Love to God, Charity to men, purity and humility. And the Holy Ghost is the great *Chymist*, that conveys all these ingredients into the furnace of a pious heart, and there, by His influence, and operation, *produces the grand Elixir of true righteousness*, which preserves the Soul unto Eternal happiness. And whoever finds the *Holy Ghost thus working in him*, will find the comfort and consolation of his Salvation in this life, which with the serious consideration of his future felicity, will be entertainment for his whole time here, and keep him always ready for his summons to Heaven; and will make his passage thither as easie to the Righteous, as it is terrible to an impenitent sinner.

XXII.

IT is impossible to fancy, and to find any Earthly entertainment for the heart

heart of man (*but Devotion*) that can raise his delights higher and higher by fruitions, without lassitude unto Eternity: which elevated devotion, is a felicity, that the Divine Lover only has; and is created in his heart with his Resurrection from sin to grace, by a continual succession of growing joys, on the assurance he finds of his second Resurrection to Glory at the day of Judgement; which is God's peculiar work in the Souls of his Beloved, to make them see that He is never absent from such as are totally devoted to love and serve Him; for such, and only such, can securely enjoy God in all his Creatures here, and have him also to eternity in Heaven. If then the rugged way thither, be so pleasant to a Righteous man, what will his Seraphick joys be there! and how worthy of our utmost endeavours to live so, that we may die capable to participate of those joys then.

XXIII.

MEn do generally create terrors, to fright their own hearts, as they do Children, with ugly Vizards, we re-
pre-

present Death unto our Fancies in dismal forms, as a Messenger sent from Satan to hurry us from our present delights into everlasting flames. And then 'tis no wonder, that habitual impenitent sinners, do start back from the approach of Death, when so dressed. But the Regenerate Man, has an Antidote against this evil; He summons his Celestial thoughts, and sets his Soul in order, (as a great Prince in State) incircled with Heavenly joys, (as his Nobility) and is also attended by crouds of Guardian Angels, to receive the same Death, with caresses of great friendship, who appears before him, drest in bright gorgeous Raiments, as an Embassador sent from the King of Kings, to consummate a League of Amity, and to give him possession of his new Conquest, with a Crown of Eternal Glory, long fought for, and at last obtained; So that we generally mistake our passage into the next World, and call it death, which is assured Life, (and that Eternal;) It is our faults, if we be frightened at the terrors of torment there, where everlasting joys do answer every pious mans expectations, who looks on the pangs of his departing Soul, but as the

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momentary touch of a sharp Lancer, that makes him bleed for future health; So that men prepar'd for Heaven, may change the terrible aspect of a grisly Death into a Divine Angelical form, fit to be courted with a most hearty welcome, who is sent by God to conduct us unto Him, where every wise good man desires to be; *and this is a great mark of the Holy Ghost on the hearts of men*, to bring sinners to such an Evangelical felicity, to live so in Gods favour, as to rejoyce to ride on Deaths Chariot in Triumph into Heaven.

XXIV.

A Pious man is *never alone* when *most alone*; but then takes more delight in his approaches to God, then this World can afford the greatest Epicure; for his devout heart is ever on the wing towards the Throne of mercy; from whence his Soul is filled with Divine comforts beyond expression, for God never fails to entertain a sincere Soul with high consolations.

XXV.

W*atch thy first waking thoughts which will declare thy Soul unto thy self; whether Carnally minded, or Spirituallized! for then is thy fancy fresh, unclogg'd with Worldly affairs, and then the time to blow up thy flaming gratitude to God, in some proportion towards what thou hast received from Him in mercies, and in blessings, (though short in point of merit,) yet such holy times, such pious ambitious contests, God allows of, and is well pleased to see such use made of his grace, by such Divine emulations in the hearts of men, who do endeavour to raise up their gratitude in competition with his benefits: But this must be in such humble Addresses, as doth become Dust and Ashes, who can do nothing of our selves, (that is good) nor think beyond what we receive, and must thank God for the thanks we give him; For it is the Holy Ghost that excites, and enables us to such a frequent and free conversation with our Great Maker; by which elevated zeal, and sincere affection in our daily acknowledgments, we shew,*

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shew, that we have some taste of that joy, and some glimpse of that glory here, which we expect in Heaven; and is some Testimony, that we have not received the grace of God altogether in vain. *For no Man can give effectual thanks to God for his mercies, until he find some assurance of his reconciliation by the Blood of Jesus Christ,* which is the Fountain of all mercies, and the great argument for our gratitude to the Father of mercies, who forgives transgressions to raise our gratitude to Love.

XXVI.

WHoever has so much Faith, as to create true notions of the Holy Trinity, and Gods eternal habitation of Glory, and Bliss in Heaven; where he believes that Christ has purchased places for all penitent reconciled sinners; that man cannot chuse but wish, and endeavour to be one of that blessed number so redeemed from Hell, and raised to everlasting Glory on Christs account: But how to attain unto this felicity, and to find in our hearts that we have attained it, is our greatest work in this World,

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and our most joyful entertainment here, which is a pre-possession of Heaven, as much as our frail nature is capable of with the Divine assistance of the Holy Ghost; So then, we must observe if our hearts are become so Regenerate, as to find more pleasure in our approaches to God, and our devout conversation with Him, then all the fruitions this world can afford us; for then we shall find an *inward dependance on God in our own hearts, such as will guide us by his Divine guiding Light*, unto the means and methods of attaining our wished salvation, and within a little time certainly grow to a much more habitual delight in Piety, then our forsaken sins formerly were; and will hold our hearts up to Heaven, ever ready to enter in, when Death comes to conduct us thither; and it will be great joy to pass the pangs of a Death-bed, and terrors of the Grave, with an assurance that our Souls shall be with God, the moment that we depart from this World, if we live Righteously in it.

XXVII.

IF we give our whole hearts to God, *wherever we are, whatever we do, our minds will be fixed on Him* (the only Centre of our Souls intrinsick happiness) 'tis like a man forced from his beloved companion, by some great affair; he dispatches it quickly, and with speed returns where he left his heart; And thus we may try our hearty Love to God. But when trivial objects, and vain diversions, do easily withdraw us from his converse, and then detain us whole days in idleness, so as to afford God but some few moments, for our morning, and evening Sacrifices; we may reckon that our Love bears the same proportion with the time spent in his service: we may also find on a strict search, that we are mistaken in the Donation of our hearts to God, by keeping of a small corner of our hearts in reserve for diversions, only to gratifie some fair-faced appetites, which do insensibly rob the major part, until that corner have ingrossed the whole heart; by which we fool our selves, to think our All-seeing God will be mocked

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with such thin Vizards on our hearts. *Take heed therefore of idle diversions,* and pray for grace to become Regenerate, to set thy heart on things above, which begets true Love to God, with Blessedness here, and for ever; which eternity can never be too much thought on, nor the Lord who disposes of Eternity, be too much loved, or too much feared; and if when we lye down to sleep, we could but learn to think that we might wake in the other World; we should labour to live close up to God, *so that Satan may find no time, to come between to tempt;* and then such reconciled sinners would discern their conversion to be a sure Testimony of God's mercy, *and the Spirit of Faith fixing the foundation of true Piety,* by which we must ascend, as the first step of *that Ladder towards Heaven.*

XXVIII.

IT is a stupendious thing, to think how our corrupt Dust and Ashes, may be exalted, *when the Spirit of God is at work in the heart of man,* when a great sinner is cleansed from his pollutions, and all his past transgressions are so wiped off by the
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Mid-night Thoughts. 31

the Holy Ghost, in the receiving of the Sacrament, that he finds *Christ born within him*, and his Soul filled with a new kind of Divine transports, which raise him in Meditations up to Heaven, by such devout Addresses, as grow higher and higher in ambitious zeal to be near God, until he obtain to be owned an Adopted Son, and while he remains on Earth, by Faith to share with Angels in some degree of Heavenly joy, and to perceive some beams of their Glory, which he shall participate of at the Resurrection; and until then, be here feasted with such devout Celestial delights, *as will give him an assurance that these are the marks of his Election, to comfort, and to fix his heart on God, who will guide his Soul through his Pilgrimage on Earth (full of storms, and calms more dangerous)* untill He brings him unto his Glory; For if we believe it to be Gospel-truth, that our bodies are capable to become the Temples of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, *we must also believe that He will manifest Himself so as we shall discern his being in us*, by such a Divine Life, with such extasies of joy, as no Soul can reach without his assistance; which

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which if we practise to observe, we shall find will prove to be our greatest consolation that the heart of man can have.

XXIX.

WE talk of Death, as we do of Eating, Drinking, and Sleeping; and do flatter our-selves too much, by thinking we are as ready for the Grave, without a full consideration, how nice, and great a preparation is fit for our appearance at the Resurrection; when our whole Lives here, spent in the service of God, is not too high a price for the Crown of Glory we then expect: And yet few men do afford the hundred part of their time, to become capable to receive that inestimable Purchase, which Christ has made for us by his bloud-shed. And nothing is more strange, then that we should so much forget what we are always a doing, (which is dying) and is God's great mercy to free our Souls from the Dungeon of this World, to fix them in his Eternal Bliss.

XXX.

XXX.

GOD sees our first intentional approaches towards Heaven, so that we cannot make more hast in our Addresse unto Him, then He makes to meet and welcom our sincere devotions, with Raptures, and Extasies of joy, to encourage, and guide our frail nature to love, and serve Him above the World; that can in no degree afford so high delights as our Souls find, when our whole hearts are offered up to Him in daily Sacrifice, while that holy flame lasts.

XXXI.

Our greatest concern, is to live so Righteously, as to be ever ready to die; which no man can think of too often, nor prepare to much for, if he considers that every moment advances towards the Grave, through which we must pass to Eternal joy, or Eternal misery; and is an argument enough, not to mispend our time, *but Day and Night to call on God, for his Divine guiding Light to shew us, the way to Him.*

XXXII.

XXXII.

Sleep is so like Death, that it is no wonder if we Dream often that we are amongst the dead; for though we are not now visited by Visions as of old! yet such frequent conversation with dead friends when we Sleep, may be looked on as kind notions from above, to give us some reflections on the Grave, towards which we do walk as fast in our Sleep, as when we are awake, so that we ought to imploy more of our thoughts on every minute that so hasts on to our Eternity, then men generally do; and by such Dreams we may learn to converse Day and Night with God in our humble Addresses, to make us fit company for His departed Saints when we Die.

XXXIII.

IF we could attain to as great Faith, as the first Martyrs had, we might have as much felicity in Piety as they had; who rejoyced so much to leave this World, that no torments could deter them

them from death, to be with Christ. And if we could raise our Souls to fancy the Glory of Heaven as they did, we should believe that nothing there, is so dirty as our brightest Diamonds, where the beauty of Holiness by Faith, as by reflection, does Eclipse all the beauty, wealth, honour, and glory of this World, in the hearts of such as are become Regenerate. And if our Souls were so sanctified, and advanced in Divine Love, as those Blessed Martyrs were, we should admit no Rivals with God in our hearts, where He delights to Reign alone. And then, *we should find our God every where with us*, carefully providing for all our wants, and supplying all our defects, as if He attended on us Dust and Ashes, with his Providence to guard us while we sleep, and to watch if our first waking thoughts be set on Him, and to expect them as his due, and his delight; as if the Almighty courted us for favours, more then we do him for his mercies, and his blessings; and when our Souls become thus enlightned by his Divine Rays from Heaven, *we shall find our hearts so full of Him, that a Wilderness, a Prison, or a Dungeon will seem a Throne,*
and

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and will be our Heaven here; and then we shall know no joy like having God ever in our sight, with hearts fixed on our Eternal Bliss already thus begun.

XXXIV.

IF we consider the extent of Miracles, those we call the greatest, are but as wonderful as the smallest, for every thing we see, all we think, every motion that answers to our thoughts in every part of our selves is Miraculous, (as to Dust and Ashes) and so in the same Ballance, we may weigh our Birth, and Dissolution, and Resurrection to be equally Miraculous. But if we consult our own consciences, and thoroughly examine our own hearts, we may be confirmed in the belief that there is no higher Miracle, then when the Holy Ghost turns the hearts of men from their long habitual, idolized, carnal appetites, into a Spiritual affection towards God, with such Heavenly transports as do create the peace of conscience, with such a settled joy in God's service, as will accompany our Souls from hence to Heaven; which Spiritual Resurrection from sin, being
God's

God's work in us, is a sure mark of our Adoption, and by this Miracle of mercy to become thus Regenerate, we may account it the highest! because of highest concern to us, to be so raised from Hell, to Heaven; And a greater Miracle to confirm the Christian Doctrine, no man needs to seek after, then what he may thus find in himself, if thus led by the Holy Ghost! and thus exalted from Reprobate Dust, to be the Adopted Son of God.

XXXV.

Plety is the best policy, because by it we obtain all that the heart of man can wish in this World, and the next, which every Pious man has a great proportion of here, and the Fool only thinks he can mock God, or flatter Him; while he does only deceive himself, in hoping to serve God, and the Devil at once; to satisfy vicious natural appetites, and enjoy Spiritual felicities at the same time, as if the way to Heaven were through Hell; But if we do doubt whether Eternal happiness, is preferable before short fruition on Earth, *we may enquire of a Vo-*

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luptuous

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*luptuous sinner when he is become truly Re-
generate, if he does not find that the peace of
conscience is a more constant delight, then
the greatest Momentary gratifications of
flesh and blood. For when he is so called
to an assurance of his Sonship, by his
Spiritual comforts from the Holy Ghost
within him, and such transports as do
afford Heavenly joys, with some glimps
of that Glory, which he shall participate
of at the Resurrection; He will perceive
it is the same gift of God, beyond hu-
mane acquisition; so that mans best po-
licy is to lead a pious Life, which will
fully satisfy all his ambitions, and an-
swer the highest affections his heart can
fancy, by having God so, by whom he
has all that is in Heaven, and in Earth.
And whoever God does thus give him-
self to, will find that he has Him, and
will perceive this is his Spiritual Adop-
tion, to encourage and enable him to live
Righteously all his days in more honour,
Glory, wealth, and felicity, then all the
Empires of this World can afford without
God: so that Piety is the best policy
to establish our happiness in this World
and the next:*

XXXVI

THere can be no comfort in this World, beyond an assurance of sins forgiven, with a full reconciliation to God; and no man can have surer marks of his Election, then to find his former contempt of God, turned into Divine Love of him, *with the Holy Ghost converting the Hell that was in his heart, into a Paradise by his habitation there;* which is an infallible earnest of Glory; for when God gives us grace to will, and to do his will, *by the power of his Spirit,* we shall want no comforts here, and be also filled with holy courage, and a joyful Faith to turn the terrors of the Grave, into a delightful desire to be with God; which is a Righteous mans greatest consolation.

XXVII.

IF a Regenerate man, blessed with Divine Love, do observe how the Holy Ghost works in his heart, at the time of his sincere vigorous Addresses to the Throne of mercy ; He will find that his

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delight

delight in the service of God, does increase with his devotion, and that his devotion is raised by that delight; so that his Soul by custom in such approaches, does grow higher and higher, by so joyful a confidence in God's favour, that no allurements can divert his Love, nor storms shake that trust on which his peace of conscience is surely founded here, and his salvation at the Resurrection as sure. Yet care must be had that such Elevations of the Soul, *may not grow beyond those Gospel Rules set us to follow*; So that the felicity of piety may be sometimes allayed by *humble recollections of our own unworthiness*, (when at best) lest Spiritual pride do puff up our hearts with such Seraphick joys, as use to rise from such extasies in devotion; (so as to think) if Angels in the presence of God, do rejoyce at the conversion of a sinner, what joy may that sinner have, above those Angels? who is so much more concerned then they are, when he finds himself snatched up from the brink of Hell, and become *as an Angel in Heaven, before he arrives there*; Which is a kind of Epicurism in devotion, and may be too much indulged, if not acknowledged from whence.

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whence it comes, with gratitude for so great a benefit received.

XXXVIII.

CHrist gave us a sure Rule to know, and to shew our Love to God, which is (*to obey his Commandments*) and not to treat Him like our fellow creatures, with passionate words, sighs, or tears, or joys, but by the sincerity of our thoughts, and actions, to shew our obedience better than by vehement extasies in devotion; though such exterior declarations from the heart, do advance our zeal, they may deceive us with flattering hopes of our being better then really we are; for 'tis not our frequent prayers, nor hearing the Word preached with delight, nor receiving the Holy Sacrament with an elevated Faith, that fully expresses, or denotes such Love to God, as He expects from us, but it is our utmost endeavours in all self-denials, towards an uniform obedience to all his known Commandments, an Evangelical sincerity in the duty required, that manifests our Love to God, and is most acceptable to Him; for though our performances do prove short of our Duties,

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God sees our integrity, and esteems us for that; our sincerity towards obedience, is very acceptable with God.

XXXIX.

GOD sees our frailties, and knows that no mans fancy can reach the felicity of Divine Love, but his, *who is endued with it from Him*; nor can that man by words express those joys that his transported Soul finds, in such welcomes as God affords in his Divine endearments to his true Lover, by such Celestial Raptures, as do make him forget that he dwells on Earth, while that bright flame of his Devotion lasts; and on his return from Heaven, while the thoughts of that Blessed Address remains, it grieves him to find that he is still on Earth, so that his body cannot mount upwards with his Soul, to the Throne of Glory, and fix there together.

XL.

HOW weak is our Faith, in the matter of Death; and how strong the frailty of our nature, *that makes us fear*
to

to go, where we desire to be? So to create terrors in the passage, when there is really none, or if any, they are such as cannot be avoided: how vain then is it to raise melancholly-Clouds to Eclipse the Glory, and dull the joy we are entering into, the moment that we Die?

XL I.

GREAT converted sinners ought frequently to consider the wonderful goodness of God, for his double mercies, who does not only forgive all past transgressions; on our reconciliation; but on our future obedience, our Faith, Love, and gratitude; He rewards such great sinners with grace to obtain Eternal Bliss; easie conditions to be admitted by God's immense goodness unto this purchase of mercy, and reward on Christs account. Which grace we must improve by rising still higher and higher in God's favour for the future; and then we shall have a double joy in all such fruitions, and diversions, as we may own in God's sight here, and at the day of Judgment, and may now thank him for; with hearts full of purity, and such bright shining innocence, as God delights in.

XLII.

God's Spirit is never absent from those that seek him sincerely, and whoever observes it, will find it so.

God Loves a Souls whiteness, that flies all approaches towards sin, with detestation. When God delivers a penitent sinner from the slavery of Satan, to rejoyce in the freedom of his service, it is to shew him a glimpse of Heaven, to invite him thither.

XLIII.

As a good conscience is a continual feast, and a great blessing, so 'tis a dangerous thing to be over-much delighted with our best duties, (though peace be in them) lest we should forget from whence all our performances do come; and so undiscernedly attribute holiness to our selves, which is God's peculiar gift. There ought also great care to be had, that we be not mistaken, to think we do enjoy true peace of conscience, when we have it not; and that we do not flatter and abuse our own hearts,

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hearts, with some things of fancy, like more holiness than we have; and so believe our vows, and desires to Piety, are effectual performed, before our actions do justify those good resolutions, and self-denials, to avoid such snares, as lie concealed under innocent diversions; lest we fall, when we think our selves most safe: So that a Pious man is to be as careful how to manage his Piety, as a sinner is to obtain it.

XLIV.

WHen we are assaulted by any temptations to sin, we may recollect our thoughts thus, shall I, for this moment of sensuality, part with my interest in God? shall I quit my Sonship, now I am reconciled; and my Title to an Eternal Crown of Glory in Heaven, to satisfy my vicious fancy, and a few momentary appetites on Earth? and now cast off the felicity, and security I have by peace of conscience, while I Love, fear, and serve God, and by my trusting Faith in Christ, do stand fast fixed above the reach of malice, and all the storms this World can raise? Shall I depart from
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this Regenerate state so full of Blessedness, to become a trembling Coward, frightened at every shadow of every evil that approaches me; and so become justly terrified with the horror of a despairing Soul, when Death approaches, which may be this minute, to step into that Eternal woe, denounced against the sin I am tempted to commit? Such reflections, with such sincere prayers as such Meditations will suggest, are surely good guards to defend and free us from the danger of yielding to any temptations to sin.

X LV.

A True penitent sinner, whose heart is touched (by grace from Heaven) with remorse for his wicked life, and a sense of God's many mercies to him; (Herepents) and recollects, to the best of his memory, all the actual, and mental transgressions of his whole life; and offers them up to God in confession, with an humble sincere contrition; and makes new vows for an universal cleansing from all iniquities, with a total resignation of himself, Soul, and body, in a full
obedi-

obedience unto all the Gospel Laws for the future. Thus, this Penitent sets himself with holy vigour, and his utmost endeavours, to walk after his Saviours steps, submitting his will, to God's will in all things; whose favour he now seeks with so great hungering and thirsting affection, that God in mercy has cancelled all the Records of his long neglects, and insolent repeated sins; so as to remember them no more: and also by his Divine power does raise this Penitent to a *Spiritual Resurrection* from sin, to grace, and so fills his contented, converted heart with frequent comforts, and such assurance of his Adoption, as to encourage him to perform this new Covenant unto the end of his Life.

By which infinite mercy, and grace, this Penitent does become so Regenerate, as to perceive the Spirit of God at work within him, raising his Soul to such a Sacred Love of his great Maker, as to think all time mispent, that is not employed in gratitude to God, for his deliverance from Hell, and his Promotion towards Heaven; of which Glory, he has now some prospect, and from hence, he grows higher in Gods favour, until his

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his holy ambitions do increase, desiring to be always in his Creators sight, and aiming at a Favourites Sons place in the Court of Heaven; Thus by degrees his Soul becomes so elevated, and transported with these Celestial honours, that he contemns the Empires of this World, with all the glistering objects here below, as unworthy to divert his thoughts on such perishing trifles as he did admire, before his heart was fixed above on his Eternal Bliss; which now fills his Soul with such continual joyful extasies in Devotion, that he is sometimes frightened at the joy he feels, lest he may embrace presumptuous Enthusiasms, by such high consolations as his Soul delights in, when his Meditations, and Addresses do ascend in such bright flaming zeal unto the Throne of Mercy; But when he considers that God, (who sees his sincerity through his heart) will not reject such sincere Sacrifices; *He then hopes that these joys do arise from the Emanation of the Holy Ghost,* to let him see how God receives, and welcomes a whole heart offer'd up to Him; with such *Divine Lights* as Earthly Souls can neither see, nor comprehend; and by this last of
Bliss,

Bliss, and by this beam of Glory here, he judges how much greater he shall have in Heaven! And thus, upon a full search of his whole heart throughout, this Penitent now finds with great felicity, that God is pleased to dwell in his heart, where Satan did so long triumph: until these new transports for his Celestial Bliss have quite extinguished those dim shadows of delight that formerly misled him to neglect his God, with a serious thought of Heaven, or Hell; or the least concern for his Eternity; until his Soul was thus raised above the reach of his iniquities, by his conversing day and night in Heaven. And thus the Soul of this new Convert, is caressed with bright Seraphick joys, by Grace so fixed, and so enlightened from above, that his inward dependance on God, is his continual consolation, and support; full of such high comforts, as he must think *do proceed from the Holy Ghost, to furnish this his new Temple with sufficient Grace, where he now intends to dwell.* And by all these *Blessed guiding Lights*, this Penitent is invited to live such a Righteous Life, as will give him an humble assurance to trust, and rejoyce in his reconciliation,

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with

50 **Mid night Thoughts.**

with a settled Faith that he shall see the face of God, in the face of Death, the moment that he dies; his Soul shall be with Christ, where his departed Saints abide, until the Resurrection.

XLVI.

WE need no better Argument for God's Love to us, then our Love of Him; which is the highest work of his Grace planted in our hearts, by which only we are enlightened to know how to love, and serve God as we ought; that we may be capable to enter into his Eternal Glory, prepared for his Lovers.

XLVII.

[*A Prayer.*]

Lord Jesus, I beseech thee forgive my transgressions, and now send down thy Holy Spirit to cleanse my heart from all impurities, and then dwell there, to guide my Meditations, and Prayers aright, with such fervent Zeal, as will encrease my Faith, my Love, and trust in thee my God; that I may know *no*

joy

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joy on Earth, like my approaches to thy Throne; and from thence impower me so to practise these great Lessons I have writ, as to live with holy courage, ever ready to die, and fit to appear at thy Tribunal, on the great day of Judgment, with such reconciled Sinners as by thy infinite mercy are become the Sons of God. Lord, I beseech thee let my heart be now so filled with Divine transporting thoughts of Thee, and thy Salvation, as to leave no place for Satan there; that my enlightned Soul may be ever on the wing, hastning towards that Eternal Bliss, which Thou hast purchased for me at so high a rate! And though my Zeal (supported by thy Grace) do now encrease, let me never think my self near enough to Heaven, till I am there. For now I find that no repulses will make Satan quit the Field, nor my Rebellious Sences to obey, that I may gain a perfect Victory, beyond the reach of a surprize; nor can I alone maintain this Christian Warfare, without Thy strong supplies from Heaven; for which I daily pray, and by which I shall at last subdue the World, and my own heart, with all the Powers of Hell, and Death together:

Then from the Grave, in Triumph rise
with thee, my God, and thy departed
Saints, to my Eternal Rest, in thy Cele-
stial Glory.

XLVIII.

THe uncertain, certain time of death,
was by Divine Providence concea-
led from Mankind, to make us live ever
ready for that great concern, *which sets
a period to our Mortality, the same moment
on which our Immortality depends for
Eternal joy, or misery*; yet this known
truth, by all believed, is by our perverse
nature so much neglected, as if not be-
lieved, or as if by our wisdom and care,
we could foresee, or prevent the moment
of our Dissolution, contrary to God's de-
cree: by which blind contradiction, few
men do prepare for their Pass to Heaven,
until too late; and so become wilfully
surprized by an Enemy we might subdue,
if ready Armed, and well prepar'd for
the encounter; *for 'tis we that make
Death terrible, who is sent in kindness to
conduct unto everlasting Bliss, unless we by
our Impiety, do compell him to lead us the
wrong way, into eternal Flames.* A near
dead-

dead-despairing sinner, reviving from the Jaws of the Grave, can best describe its terrors, and best judge of the felicity to become fit to die, when next summoned to step into his Eternity.

XLIX.

THough we cannot guess at the glorious Essence of God, nor fancy what Heaven is; nor can tell whether the Joy, or Glory there be greatest, nor do know any thing whereby we may express either of them; yet by our Faith in all Gospel-truths, *God does so enlighten, and encourage those Souls that are wholly devoted to love, and serve him, and that approach his presence with such humble Zeal, and sincere Awe, as is due to His Almightyness! that He sometimes descends into the hearts of such men, and spiritually dwells there, as in his own Temple; and sometimes raises the Souls of men, with such high transports of Sacred Love to Him, that they are filled with Holy Air, or something nameless, so Divine for joy and glory, while that Seraphick flame doth last; it looks like Raptures, and holy Extasies, sent from Heaven to invite*

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men thither, by shewing them so vast a difference of delight, between Heaven, and Earthly fruitions; so to encourage us to expell all carnal Vapours, when ever they arise to interpose, that *nothing may Eclipse that Divine Light from shining on us, by which God gives us grace to endeavour with all our power to raise up our hearts to Him*, as often and as high as our clogged Souls can mount with such a weight of flesh and bloud about them. But when the Holy Ghost lends wings to a Divine Lovers heart in his devotions, nothing can hinder his Souls ascent to Heaven! and by Faith to raise his fancy to such a joyful conversation with God, as will enrich his mind with chearful thoughts the whole day after.

L.

IF the felicity of Piety were as generally known, as it is despised, there would be more Saints, then Reprobates on Earth: But, as it is Satans chief work to amuse, and abuse our frail natures, with present fruitions of fallacious delights that last not: so it must be our business to get better Guides, that we may find our way
to

to Heaven, in spight of His diversions; which the Pious man finds in a constant conversation with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in his sincere Meditations and Prayers; when They are all at work within him, raising his Soul to such a Divine felicity, that he has no room for such contemptible delights as carnal fancies can suggest to divert him: *for his pious Life keeps him as much above all the fading gaieties of this World, as the Reprobate is enslaved to them.* And if it were possible to make a voluptuous Epicure see, and relish those continual joys, which true peace of conscience affords to a Regenerate man, it might wean him from his mistaken momentary happiness; *while the Pious mans felicity, is founded on a sure Rock that reaches up to Heaven, and shews him such a delightful prospect of his Eternal Interest there, as gives him a holy courage to out-face Death, when he chearfully submits unto his summons to the Grave, as the only Gate to Heaven.*

LI.

T*He great felicity of true Piety, is only known to the Regenerate man,* become a Divine Lover, whose Soul is ever busie in fervent Addresses to his Beloved, from whom he receives such welcom, that his transported Soul forgets this World, while that bright flame burns within him; which fills his heart with such transcending joys, in conversation with his Beloved, as can only be expressed, when two such Divine Rivals meet, with pleasure to repeat the great favours that both do daily receive from the glorious object of their Love, and with such Angelical affections to each other, as doth raise their felicities, by the holy emulation their united hearts have to joyn in a constant Adoration of their Beloved, whose universal kindness does afford so great pleasure, and consolation to all his true Lovers, that their joys increase by the number of new Rivals; which makes them invite all they can get, into their Society; and together sing *Hallelujahs* on Earth, until they be added unto those Choirs of Angels, already in the Glory of God.

LII.

WE all know that we are every moment dying, and *that Death is but the last puff of breath ; and though nothing else be worth the thinking on, nothing is less thought on then Death, which we can neither prevent, nor delay ; and should therefore be made as easie as we can, by a constant expectation of his approach, (because surprizes are most terrible) which the Divine Lover is ever Armed for, and best knows how to baffle that great Conqueror, by chearful embraces as a welcom Friend, who comes to conduct him to his Souls joy in Heaven ; which holy Valour, God always provides his Lovers with, at their hour of death.*

LIII.

A *Divine Lover has ever in mind the glorious Idea of his Beloved, and remembers that he is always in His sight, who doth observe all his looks, thoughts, words, and actions, how they do agree with his professed Love ; that is, if the whole*

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whole man be resigned up to study, and to do the will of his Beloved, with a chearful heart, as the supreme delight, and fullest happiness his Soul can wish for here on Earth. This Divine Lover does also take all the opportunities he can every day and night, by holy Meditations and Prayers to approach the Throne of Mercy with a sincere heart, so full of his Beloved, as to leave no room for sin, or Worldly vanities to abide there, either to divert, or clog his Soul, when-raised on the wings of fervent Devotion : And thus he spends his time, ever striving to please, and as careful not to offend his Beloved, still jealous lest any undiscerned Rival, should in some friendly disguise steal into his heart, and claim a place there; so to deface that Altar, and defame his daily sacrificed heart, entirely offer'd up to his Beloved; and every night lies down to Rest with the same Zeal, and inward dependance on his Souls joy, with a full assurance, that if he awake in the other World, he shall be with his Beloved there; from whence such growing comforts do arise, as to confirm his Adoption, and fix his Faith to live so Righteously, that he enjoys

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joys God in all his Creatures here, with great satisfaction. Yet with holy courage, is ever so ready to die, that in spite of his natural aversion from the Grave, he resolves to rejoyce at his summons thither, where he stedfastly believes to meet his Beloved ready to raise him to his Eternal Glory. *For though the Hill we climb to Heaven, be full of Thorns and Briars, we may gather Roses, and Lillies in our ascent, to make it more easie; if we do mind how our Celestial joys increase, as we arrive towards the last step we make, to enter into that Glory.*

LIV.

GOD mocks no man with a false Light, that begs his guiding Light sincerely, with such a dependance on Him, as shews a Faith capable to receive it, and to be led by it; so as to embrace, and welcom such Divine operations, and comforts, as the Holy Ghost conveys with that Light so clearly into his Soul, that he must see it comes from God; and which will raise his heart by this Light thus led, to find such a spiritual joyful trust, and confidence in his great Maker, that no
storms

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storms can fright him, nor vain delights divert him from his constant course towards Heaven, nor shake his assurance of a blessed participation of God's Glory at the Resurrection. So that the greatest sinner that can obtain Grace to repent, and forsake his sins, so as to be thus led to live ever after in God's favour, will not fail to be received into God's bosom the moment that he dies.

L V.

IT is too true that thou art fallen into disgrace, and dost deserve it, (thus :) Suppose thy heart to be a Royal Fort, entrusted to thy keeping and defence, by the *King of Kings*, (for so it is) and is besieged by Satan, *with an Host of Giant sins*, disturbing thee with continual loud *Alarms*, and frequent sharp Assaults : yet by thy *strong Guards within*, (from Heaven sent) and thy *constant vigilance, with holy Valour* thou bravely didst repulse this mighty Enemy, and hast gain'd many *Victories*; for which, thy King did promise to reward thy Virtues with a Crown of Glory. But by thy *success grown proud*, and securely confident of thy own conduct,

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duct, and mistaken power, thou didst become *so negligent of thy Out-guards*, and *so remiss within*, that the *subtle Enemy* was encouraged to *return with Stratagems*, and did by his insinuating Spies, corrupt thy *chief Officers* who let in a *few Pigmie sins*, (*sly Foes*) disguis'd like *smiling Friends*, full of flattering allurements; such, as in short time were by thee admitted, and entertain'd, and so far trusted, as to get an opportunity to surprize thy Fort, and to lead thee in Satans Chains towards his Eternal Darkness. Thus the *glory of all thy first Victories*, are by thy *presumption and supine negligence*, turned into *reproach*; and thy *reward* into a just *punishment*, for being so baffled by a *Conquer'd Enemy*: until by thy *submission*, and *repentance*, thou be *restored to favour*, and *deliver'd* from this *Captivity*, by a more *powerful Conqueror*.

LVI.

AS to love God and fear Him, is certainly to please him; so, to do neither, is as sure to offend him: and on this, which we so little regard, our present,

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and Eternal happiness depends. So that we cannot be too watchful, that our own hearts do not deceive us, by thinking that God only Reigns there, where his Creatures have more Interest then Himself. But He is not to be mocked with outward shews, or formal Ceremonies; He discerns our neglects, when our hearts are alienated from him in the least degree, and sees through all our disguises, when with burning Souls we adore his Creatures joyntly with Himself, if not before Him! who never will admit of such Competitors, as those Idols of our setting up are; whom we worship, love, fear, and delight to converse with more hours every day, then we do afford Him; by which 'tis evident, that God has not our whole hearts, and so does not Reign there.

LVII.

That peace of conscience which is grounded on the felicity of piety, is such a continual feast, full of such growing joys, as only the Regenerate man can feel, by the Divine Love he finds his own heart full of, with such returns of gratitude to
 bmo God,

God, as begets a kind of Raptures, and Extasies in Devotion, such as do invite and encourage him to a delightful sincerity in all his Addresses to his great Maker; with whom he converses day and night, where he ever finds access, and high returns of grace from God.

LVIII.

A Particular self-denial of some darling sin, may shew a good inclination to Piety, but is not the perfection of that Duty, which must be universal to all that God forbids; and not only to forbear actual transgressions for a time, but for ever: else we fortifie in vain, by leaving such gaps open, as will invite the Enemy to re-enter; by which we also hold up a dangerous Treaty, and commerce with Foes that ever study to destroy those hearts that do admit them: For while Satan has any part there in possession, or reversion, or but a hope to claim by, He will disturb the whole man; so that all his pretensions must be totally abolished, by giving up our whole hearts to God; and this for our good only, that our carnal warfare may be more easie here, by placing our

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only joy on Him. And then our Pilgrimage on Earth will end in the fruition of never-fading happiness in Heaven.

LIX.

TO die is terrible, when we are surprised by it ; but by frequent Meditations of dying, custom will make it easie : For if we believe Heaven to be better then Earth, we must believe that we shall find better company there, then we converse with below , and 'tis Death that only can convey us unto them. And if by a Righteous life, with a lively Faith, we can be assured in our passage through the Grave, that our Souls shall tast some degrees of that Eternal Bliss, with the departed Saints, the moment we expire ; can any thing on Earth invite us to stay longer here ? But our frailty is such, that we generally make that the least business of our life, for which our life is given us ; and is really the only considerable object, fit for our continual thoughts, so to love and serve God here, that we may be capable of dwelling with him for ever in Heaven, and in that hope go chearful to Him, when He calls for us.

LX.

LX.

A *Regenerate man, in his highest Divine course of life, may be assaulted, and diverted by such surprizing temptations, as he cannot at first sight so resist, and reject, but that Satan may pursue, until he drives a Regenerate Soul from all its Out-works, into its Cittadel in Heaven; where God does never fail to give such powerful Aids, as make the invading Enemy retire and vanish.*

LXI.

L *Et a long habitual sinner that repents, manifest his conversion to himself, by frequent sincere retirements with God, and then set his whole heart to raise and fix his collected thoughts on things above! which will create a delight in the Lord, more then in all his Creatures; and by such custom, he will grow to grudge all time as lost, that diverts him from the pleasant conversation of this new-gain'd acquaintance with his gracious God; who also likes to have him wholly to Himself, (when he desires*

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to be so :) and when this Convert doth obtain grace to arrive at this felicity of favour here, he cannot rest so, but will raise his ambitious Zeal to such pure Love, as to hunger and thirst after the sight of God's face in Glory. For if *thus enlightened by the Holy Spirit, his Faith will increase, and cherish such Divine flames with joy and gratitude, as the surest marks of his Reconciliation, and Adoption;* and will encourage him to proceed with vigour in his Advance towards Heaven.

LXII.

DO nothing in private in God's sight, that thou darest not do in the view of all the World, and own at the day of Judgment; and keep this resolution ever in thy mind, and constantly pray for Grace to do so, by which thou wilt avoid many sins.

LXIII.

THere is nothing more deceitfully prejudicial to a new converted sinner, then to believe himself a favourite of Gods, upon his first serious thoughts and inclination.

tion to Piety, with some light flashes of Spiritual joys in Devotion; (which novelty) an habitual sinner mistakes for a possession of Heaven, at first sight, and in too much haste, thinks himself an Adopted Son: which time and perseverance can only make legitimate; and must also be tryed by a nice and serious examination of our hearts, such as is seldom understood by new Converts; who may rejoyce to find they have discarded some presumptuous sins, and yet be far from a just pretence, and title to a place in Heaven. (For instance,) a man may resolve well, and pray with zealous sincerity, repent too with sighs and tears, and have a great proportion of Faith, Hope, and Charity, with Humility also; but if *he want the true Christian purity of heart, the rest will not prove a full acceptable Sacrifice to God, who only sets his seal on our whole hearts resigned unto Him.* So that if we keep a reserve but of one corner for unlawful diversions, to bestow on our fellow Creatures, or on carnal sinful appetites, all the rest will not be accepted, for God will admit of no sharer, nor endure competitors. So then, we are to consider, *if the value of such a small reserve,*

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reserve, be worth the losing of the whole purchase we pretend to; and next, what kind of Salvation it would be, if God deal with us accordingly! if He should accept of so much of our hearts, as we are pleased to spare Him, and leave the remaining reserved part for Satan. For though God designs a full perfect Eternal happiness unto all that give their whole hearts to him, and affords his Divine guiding Light, with power to find the way to Heaven, for all those who pray to be so guided with sincerity and Faith; yet the smoak of our parcel Sacrifices from our divided hearts, will not ascend half way to Heaven.

LXIV.

I*F we believe there is so great joy, and happiness in Heaven; why are we so lazy, and cold in our approaches thither! why do we not prefer that glorious Crown of Immortality, before the perishing Goods of this World! for which, our hearts can have no rest until obtain'd; which is a sad consideration, to think how we neglect our greatest concern, by delaying our reconciliation to*
God,

God, as if time were at our dispose either to recall, or adjourn, and do not consider how every moment that we carelessly mis-spend, carries us on to our last step into the Grave, and our first step into Eternity; but if we did think frequently, and seriously of Heaven as we ought, and that the Grave is the way thither, we should not dread Death as we do, nor fear to go, where we desire to be: but such Holy Valour, does only belong to Righteous men, and not to habitual sinners.

LXV.

M*Any men fear to die, because they are better acquainted with this World, than the next; which they want Faith for, or else are loth to part from their beloved sins, and fear God's anger for such crimes as they fear God's anger for, yet will run that risque, rather then forsake their sins, until they die. Though all men know, that the best way to triumph o're the Grave, is to live so well, as ever to have in mind the two Eternities of Bliss and Torments; to one of which Death conveys us. So that it is no wonder if we trem-*

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tremble at the sight of Death, when we prepare not for it, by considering, that every moment leads us on to what we so much dread, and yet so much neglect! And also men should consider that the youngest, and most healthy do stand every minute on the brink of Eternity, to perswade them to be ready for their summons thither: So that unless we want Faith in Christ's merits, and doubt God's promises, that if we become so truly Pious, as to love God so much above all his Creatures, that we cannot fear to part with them, to go to Him. *So that nothing can more concern mankind, then frequent thoughts of our preparation to step into our Eternity,* when we all know there is no true Rest, but that which is Eternal. Is it not then great folly, to know that we cannot live ever here, and must be gone for ever, and yet do still set our hearts on these moments, and prefer them before that for ever! thus to fear petty troubles here, and not be at all concerned for endless Torments! and this for want of thinking seriously, that we carry Immortal Souls within us, and should have Immortal Aims, and Immortal Ends, when we consider that our

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Eternity begins with our Birth, and we that moment do begin to die, and so are dying until we are dead, and gone for ever; which words (**FOR EVER**) ought to ring ever in our ears, to mind us to live ever ready for that *For Ever*; which will make us not to fear death, when we consider, *that we have a merciful God, who when mans conversion begins, His displeasure makes a period*: So that 'tis want of Piety and Faith, that makes us fear to die:

LXVI.

IF we believe all we have, that is good, does come from God; we ought in all our enjoyments, to give Him continual thanks, so to keep up our hearts to Heaven, by a constant gratitude, which is as acceptable as prayers; and the pious use of his Creatures, and daily Blessings, we shall find a double delight in all the good things we receive from God's hand, because we do enjoy Him in them; and shall avoid all such evils, as we dare not own to come from God: And if we consider that *our lives here, are only to make our journey to Heaven; we cannot have a*
better

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better Guide thither, than the Holy Ghost, who will never mislead them, who desire to be guided by Him; and from whom we shall get such a habit of Holiness, as will bring us to such an intimate acquaintance with Christ, as will in a short time wean us so much from the Love of this World, as to be chearfully ready to die; when we see that the end of our journey is, God's call to take possession of the Crown of Glory, prepared for us.

LXVII.

A *Pious man, that lives ever ready to die,* has a continual prospect of his glorious Resurrection, and can have no greater happiness on Earth, *then his inward assurance of being one of God's Elect,* who, Christ says, shall sit on his right hand in Heaven, when the Reprobate are cast down into Everlasting flames.

LXVIII.

IT is said in Scripture, that *when Jacob found God was so near him,* he was afraid; which may teach us, that no man ought

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ought to think himself fit for a familiar acquaintance with his great Maker, such as to remove the reverential fear, that is due unto so high and supreme a Majesty; and yet we may believe, and find that His Kingdom of Grace is already come, and is amongst us now; so that we may with humble hearts say as *Jacob* did, *Surely the Lord is in this place, and in our hearts too, when we are led by his Holy Spirit to study Him*; and can fully consider, that though all our senses are naturally inclined to like, and cover varieties of all sorts, and that our busy fancies are as readily subservient to work the same way, and as eagerly do pursue the various desires of every appetite, though we every day find that all objects do by fruition soon decay, and cloy our highest desires that are not Rooted in Eternity. How fit is it then to consider this? and how much better it will be to persuade our Immortal Souls to rob our perishing senses of their depending fancies, and employ them on things above, as far as they can reach towards the glorious Habitation of God; where such objects are as Immortal as our Souls are, and where our variety of joys will in-

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crease by such fruitions as never fade, but will grow and multiply the more for gathering, so as to be ever filling our hearts with high delights, but yet never so full, but still to admit of more and more felicity as our desires rise, until we reach the Fountain of Eternal Bliss, where our Souls will be replenished with Celestial joys, but never so to overflow as to be weary of them. And thus we may be as happy, as *Jacob* was, if we can persuade our hearts to throw out Satan, with all his disguised flattering Troops, and entertain the Holy Ghost as cheerfully as we have indulged our blind affections, that led us on towards our Eternal ruine: And when we have thus discarded Gods Enemies as our own, we must approach His glorious Majesty with fear and trembling, though we do adore, and worship Him at the same time with comfort.

LXIX.

IF we did well consider of dying, and the joy our Souls will have as they expire, when reconciled to God before that hour comes, it will be ample recompence for our whole lives spent in his service, and is worthy

worthy of our continual Meditation, and devotion to prepare for so immense a mercy to penitent sinners; such as will turn the terrors of the Grave into a joyful assurance of a blessed Resurrection to Glory; beyond which, no man can fancy a concern fitter for his thoughts to work on, and his utmost endeavours to obtain of God; who never rejects a sincere heart offer'd up to Him in a daily Sacrifice; which the Pious man never fails to do with delight; and never misses of the consolation he seeks at his hour of death, and in his way to it.

LXX.

THe true Idea of Holiness, is *Divine Love*; which we may judge of, by *entirely resigning our wills, to the will of God*; and the perfection of Righteousness, is to live a Divine Life; such as takes delight to abhor the crimes we have loved, and to press on in our devotions, until we obtain a full Victory over all our carnal passions; and by worthy receiving the Holy Sacrament, to fix and confirm our Christianity, on the assurance we find by a lively Faith, (thus qualified)

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to live ever ready for our call unto Eternal Bliss, which may be the next minute, and cannot be too often thought on by those who love God, and desire his Love, on whose free mercy our Eternity depends.

LXXI.

WE may flatter our selves with a mistaken belief of Holiness, which we have not, and we may abuse the World, with a disguised shew of Holiness, which we know we have not; but when Death comes, such Vizards vanish, and our hearts will be display'd in their true colours, to our selves and others. So that *the best marks for Regenerate men to know themselves by, is strictly to observe, if they love God with their whole hearts, with an universal delight therein; that is, with thankful hearts to praise his holy Name, to fear, obey, worship, and trust in Him with such a lively Faith, and clear affection, as to be ever ready to forsake all we have in this World, and chearfully to breath our Souls into God's bosom, when He calls for them: And whoever shall obtain this Treasure of Grace to find*

these

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these marks in himself, will have such a proportion of that joy, and that glory, as will encourage him to persevere in Righteousness, until he arrives at God's Eternal Rest; where such blessed Souls desire to be, who do know no diversions so delightful here on Earth, as a daily preparation for Heaven.

LXXII.

TO think, and try, are two small words of great consequence; because that man who will not think, or dares not think what he has done, or what he is doing, or what he intends to do, is in a sad condition; for he can neither confess his sins, nor repent, nor forsake, nor ever hope for a pardon for them, while he neither thinks, nor tries to learn to think of his Eternity. He is past cure, without a miracle of mercy for his conversion; which is seldom afforded to such stubborn hearts as will not think, nor ever try to think seriously of their Salvation, before it be too late.

H3 LXXIII.

LXXIII.

NO Christian in his senses, will own to love God's Creatures, better then we love Him; yet we do it, and see it not; that is, not observe how often, and how long we lay God aside, to enjoy them; for nothing can take us from God, but what we love better. And though there is no felicity to be compared to Piety, nor any diversions so delightful as Devotion, when we love God, and serve him with sincerity; yet we mind it not enough, that mind it most; too much, no man can.

LXXIV.

WE are naturally apt to cozen our selves, with thinking we believe what we do not believe, and for want of due consideration of all our ways, we run on in such undiscernible errors, as must offend God, while we think we serve him best; and this, by indulging many kinds of innocent diversions, until they become crimes. though we know that vain and idle thoughts, do often grow

grow to foul suggestions, which pious men should therefore not admit of.

LXXV.

WE are often misled, by thinking too much of what may be, and too little of what must be; in providing too much for our uncertain hope of living from year to year, with too little regard to our assured death that must come; as if our moments here, were of more value than our Eternity in Heaven; though we do know that nothing in this World is worthy to entertain our Immortal Souls with true delight, but by making ready to go unto God with chearful hearts, of which, few men do think enough, and none can think too much, because it is the greatest felicity that our Piety can reach, and a sure mark that the Holy Ghost is working in us; which no habitual sinner is capable of.

LXXVI.

NO man can want a subject for Meditation, nor have a more useful entertainment, than frequently, and seriously

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riously to consider, and examine his own life, by recollecting what mercies, what blessings, and deliverances he has had from God; and to enquire of his own heart, how little obedience, gratitude, and love he has return'd; *what vows made in sickness, dangers, and in times of trouble, but never kept.* And above all, to consider how often God has *knocked at our hearts for entrance*, and been denied; or delayed, to admit of some more pleasing Guest; or whenever permitted to enter, *how coldly received, and slightly treated*, until thrust out again, to make room for some darling sin, that must be welcomed. This, if fully considered, may bring us to a sense of our offences; and shame to think how unfit we are for our Death-beds, and Eternity to come, with the amazing terrors, to think how we can call on our so much offended God for mercy, which He could never prevail with us to accept of; *and what hope then, can such insolent contemners of God, have in their last day?* But on the contrary, this Meditation will bring comfort to a Regenerate man, *who has entertain'd Christ in a cheerful heart, with sincere integrity, to such a joyful trust*
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in God's love, by his fixed Faith, that no carnal affections can remove his transports for Heaven; the expectation whereof is delightful to him, above the terrors of death to lessen.

LXXVII.

THe sum of all the great Lessons we can learn, is to shew, that a faithful penitent sinner, who is become so Regenerate as to forsake all his iniquities, and can perform an universal obedience to all God's Laws, with such Evangelical sincerity as to make a total resignation of himself, with all his Interests, into God's hands; must be led by the Spirit of God; which will keep up his heart to Heaven, in a constant concern for God's favour, where Satan dares not appear to tempt, when he sees us so united unto Christ; and this will bring a Penitent to endure his Pilgrimage through all the storms of this World, and defend him from the glittering vanities also, so as to know no fear, nor joy, to interrupt his expectation of Heaven, and the happy hour to breathe out his Soul into the Bosom of God; which holy ambition, will entertain his heart

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heart here, with more present happiness, than all the Worlds wealth can afford to a wilful habitual sinner.

LXXVIII.

[A Prayer.]

“**L**ord, I beseech thee, let thy Holy
 “Spirit direct my prayers in my ap-
 “proaches to thy Throne of Mercy, and
 “there pray within me, that so guided,
 “I may find grace from Heaven, to sup-
 “port me in my passage out of this
 “World, unto thy habitation of Eternal
 “Bliss. And now wean me from longer
 “wandering in the vain Labyrinths, and
 “Glories here, by having ever in mind,
 “that all the greatness, and various
 “pleasures I have seen, and shared in,
 “are vanished like a Dream; and there-
 “by find, that nothing is so delightful to
 “a Regenerate reconciled sinner, as a
 “retired habitation, free from the noise of
 “Worldly affairs, where by thy Grace,
 “peace of conscience may encourage me
 “to be ever ready at thy call, O God!
 “with a joyful heart, to make my last
 “step into the glorious Eternity I hope
 “for,

“for, by the Merits, and Mediation of
“Jesus Christ.

LXXIX.

When the Holy Ghost dwells in our hearts, we shall find new principles of a Divine Nature, producing there an universal Victory over all our carnal appetites, and an universal obedience to all God's Laws, with trust in his Providence, and such Faith in Christ's Merits, and Intercession, as will assure us of all God's promises, as if now actually in our possession; from whence will arise continual comforts, with hearty gratitude for such love and mercy to penitent sinners. And by this first Resurrection from Sin to Grace, be assured of our second to Glory; so that to be thus sanctified by the Holy Ghost, we are united unto Christ, brought home to God the Father, as his adopted Children, and do begin to enter on our everlasting happiness even in this World, by our continual Meditations, and Prayers, so to raise this Holy flame as high as here we can reach, without presumption; so to fix in our hearts the joyful practice of such a Divine Life, and
Divine

Divine Love to God, as will produce Divine joys here, and for ever in Heaven; which no carnal fruitions can attain. *And thus we are led by the Spirit of God, and do become the adopted Sons of God.*

LXXX.

IF the most voluptuous sinners could discern the felicity of an Holy life, what constant elevated joys, the peace of a quiet conscience brings to those who can wean their minds from the fading pleasures, and drudgeries of this World, to fix their hearts on things above, sinners would make hast to become Regenerate. For if we consider right of Eternity, we must know that our Immortal Souls, when freed from the slavish appetites of flesh and blood, can have no transports like those immortal joys they find, *when settled in their Centre, God's Bosom, from whence they came*; so that our Souls can relish no felicity like the hope of Heaven, nor be much concerned for any thing less then Eternal Bliss, which though of our selves we cannot reach, yet if we give our hearts to God, *we cannot miss it*: But if in contempt of
God,

God, we live and die in endless sinning, we may justly fear that our Eternity will be in scorching flames. We ought also to consider, though God has promised pardon unto penitent sinners, He has not promised one hour of Life to repent in; since therefore we can neither prevent death, nor foresee it, let us always expect it as at hand; and prepare for our Eternal Glory in the presence of God, while we have time to do it.

LXXXI.

Most men do say, and do believe they love God; and no doubt many good men do, more or less; but all mankind ought to enquire into their own hearts, *if they find not more joy in their idle diversions, than in God's company; if they be not quickly weary of conversing with God, in Meditation and Prayers, hasting to return into their diversions, which they love better than Him; and then consider the consequence of such contempts, and how much our selves do scorn a divided heart, where we love, much more then, doth God despise those who prefer his Creatures before Himself.*

LXXXII.

GOD knows our frailties, and doth allow us diversions, but they must be such as we may own in his sight, and see Him in them, with grateful hearts for such refreshments, as Humane Nature does require, and such as we may glorify his Name in their fruitions : and be sure not to flatter our selves into evil temptations, by our fair-fac'd diversions too much indulged, lest they sting us to death with smiles.

LXXXIII.

THere is another kind of happy, and blessed diversions, free from sinful vanities, and fading glories of the World, which *David* so much delighted in, by his retirements to converse with God, as his Souls chiefest joy ; and whoever seeks God with the like zeal, *no doubt will find Him, as David did*, and be as fully happy as he was in God's esteem ; which is an ambition that does become good Christians, as the best diversions we can have to raise our hearts to Heaven.

LXXXIV.

LXXXIV.

MEn ought with great care to watch their diversions, for we are often betrayed into a neglect of God, even by innocent diversions, which by custom do insensibly engage our hearts to consent unto evil actions, when we design nothing that is ill. So that if we serve God as we ought, we shall delight to converse with him in our retirements, and account our holy Meditations of Heaven, to be our most pleasant diversions; so to refresh our Spirits, when tired with Worldly affairs; and we shall find that such Celestial diversions, will be blessed with Divine joys, that cannot be shaken by Carnal appetites, nor by glistering Vanities, when once fixed and ratified by God's reception of us into his List of Adopted Sons; *and then be so guided by his Holy Spirit, as to grow higher and higher in his favour, till we participate of his Glory; which inward assurance will be a more pleasant subject for our diversion, than all the Wit, the Wealth, the Honours, and Beauties of this World can entertain our hearts with.* And when God dwells thus

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in the Souls of men, it is the most ravishing diversion we can have, to see our selves live ready to enter into His Eternal joy, at a minutes warning.

LXXXV.

WHen we approach God with sincere hearts, there can be no diversion more delightful then our Souls union with Him; who knows all our wants, all our oppressions, and sees all our concerns whatever; and is as ready to redress our grievances, and to bless our honest endeavours, as we can be to desire it; which our pious diversions, above all other diversions the most delightful; so that the best of idle diversions, (though innocent) is like warming frozen Vipers in our breasts, until we give them strength to bite us to death. And if we do observe it, we shall find, that there is no real essential pleasure in any diversions, *but in true Devotion*; which the Regenerate man finds to be true.

LXXXVI.

LXXXVI.

WE have two very remarkable notions, fit for frequent consideration, to judge how our hearts stand towards God, and how we may discern his love to us: The first is, to observe if we have more joy in our retired Devotions, then in the fruition, and conversation of his Creatures; in which we cannot be mistaken, if we diligently observe *how his Holy Spirit works in us at those times.* From whence arises the second consideration, to observe how our Souls are elevated by his Divine comforts *descending on us* in such Devotions; which is the best assurance we can have, that we do love God above all his Creatures, and doth also shew *that He sees it, likes it, and rewards us for it,* by his returns of Grace, in giving a delightful perseverance in such sincerity to Him; which is the highest experiment that our frail Natures can make, when we love God so well, as to converse with Him in our humble Addresses, before all Carnal felicities, and can rejoyce to go to Him, when He calls for us.

LXXXVII.

After all that has, or can be said, the only way which God himself, hath in his Holy Gospel fixed on, for the exaltation of his Glory, in the forgiveness of sins, is, that all sinners should come to Him merely upon the account of Grace in the blood of Christ; and not to rest on, nor support our selves with general hopes of mercy, mixed with our endeavours, and obedience; *but to come up to the Gospel Rule by a fixed Faith in Christ, and make that way our all: by giving Glory to God therein as He hath appointed, lest we perish Eternally. For no man shall receive pardon and forgiveness of sins, but those who come unto God by the blood of Christ. And the sin against the Holy Ghost is only excepted from such forgiveness.*

LXXXVIII.

All the Arguments we can hear, or read, or fancy to our selves, by conversing with God in holy Meditations of Heaven, and Eternal Bliss in his

presence there, will not extinguish the natural affection between our Souls and Bodies, so far as to desire, or to be willing, to have a separation by death, without a miraculous addition of Faith, and Grace, to work beyond the reach of our Nature: though we do believe that the time between our Death, and our Resurrection, is but a moment to Eternity; and though that moment should last an hundred thousand years, it will be as undiscernible for its duration, as while we sleep one minute. So that we must be satisfied in this mystery, without farther enquiry; and pray to be contented in that point, to be as happy when we die, as God's departed Saints are, until they and we arise together. *And this is great comfort, to know that we shall be with them in death, if we do sincerely endeavour to live and die in God's favour, as they did:* And so make ready to go, where we all pretend to desire to be, when we can stay no longer here.

LXXXIX.

WE must not entertain Spiritual Pride, nor welcome flattering Enthusiasms

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enthusiasms in our devotions, nor attribute such Holiness to our selves: as is the immediate gift of God: but we may, nay we must joy, and rejoyce to find the Holy Ghost at work within our hearts, to perform our self-denials for us; and to raise our Souls to such a felicity here, in our Love to God; and delight in his worship, as will give us a taste of our Eternal Bliss, when we shall see, and enjoy Him as the Angels in Heaven do.

X C.

IT is no wonder to see men very devout in a time of danger, sickness, or any other afflictions; but when the Evils are removed, does our gratitude for deliverance justify our Love to God by future obedience? do we in health and prosperity, approach God with the same vigour in our Prayers, as in our sickness? For Souls led by the Spirit of God, are alike devout in all changes; and we being made whole, ought to thank God, and to sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto us.

X C L.

XCI.

Our greatest affair in this World, is to make ready to go out of it for ever; because every moment may be our last here, and then how dismal an Eternity are we hasting to! if not reconciled unto God before we die: this is enough to persuade us to set our hearts on the Love and Service of God, who will never let their devout endeavours be lost, that seek how to please Him, when with sincere affections, they prepare to come unto Him.

XCII.

Whoever finds that the power of Divine Love, with the expectation of Heaven at this distance, doth create such joy in his Regenerate heart, as doth bring him to delight in a Divine Life also, by his frequent conversation with God in humble sincere approaches; he will soon grow to such a habit of Holiness, as will raise his Faith to foresee some beams of that Celestial Light, which his Soul shall shine in at the Resurrection, as a reward of his inward dependance on God here:

And

And if thus reconciled and led by the Holy Ghost, he shall also find this is a good Antidote to prevent relapses into sin; and thus Armed with Divine joy, he will be safe from Carnal temptations, and will have his Soul full of such Heavenly comforts, as will sweeten all afflictions, and at last beget such Holy courage, as will destroy the sting of Death, by living ever ready to die; for he that can love God above his creatures, will gladly part with them to go to Him.

XCIII

L Et no man boast of his own Righteousness, for no man has any, but what is given him from God; yet let every man rejoyce, and be thankful for such Grace as doth sanctifie, and enable his Dust and Ashes to become Regenerate, and learn so to welcom the Spirit of God in a cheerful heart, that he may make it Paradise where he is pleas'd to dwell: And then that man's natural corruptions will be refused, and his Body consecrated into the Temple of God; and by this miracle of mercy, the most incarnate sinner may become an Angel of Light: but not by his own inherent

inherent Righteousness, but by God's grace and mercy, with Christ's Righteousness imparted unto Him.

XCIV.

Amongst all the great Lessons we have learnt, Holiness is most worthy of our study, to search our hearts if we can find there the Gospel-marks of our Election; for when God invites us by his Holy Spirit to this sincere enquiry, He will direct us by his Divine guiding Light, to find, and to feel when we have found the treasure that we seek; by the comforts that will still grow, until they fill our Souls with such Coelestial joy, that we cannot miss of, nor mistake what we search for, to assure our Election; for God will not be hid from such as he sees does seek Him with their whole hearts, and that do hunger and thirst after Holiness; and when we do obtain Grace to discern such marks of our Spiritual Filiation, we may in great humility rejoyce, and sing Hallelujahs unto God with the Angels in Heaven, to shew the highest Adoration our hearts can express, in gratitude for such mercy afforded unto men on Earth,
And

And by thus entertaining our selves within our selves, avoid temptations, and set our hearts above the power of all vain objects to divert us from the prime end, and felicity of our Christian calling; which is our Resurrection from sin to grace, as the chief mark of God's favour to assure our reconciliation; for Grace accepted, and persevered in, is the infallible earnest of Glory; because Christ has made the Kingdom of Grace here, all one with the Kingdom of Glory. Which is much talked of by many that prepare not for it; because most men in health do think themselves ready to die, and do not find they are not, until the Bell tolls them to their Graves; hoping to jump from Hell to Heaven at once, but the ascent is high, steep, and very hard to climb.

XCV.

THough the great art and mystery of self-denial, to subdue all carnal appetites, is the most difficult part of our Christian calling; yet the same Holy Spirit that invites us to it, will empower our hearty endeavours, by diligence and custom to gain so absolute a Victory over our Tyrant fancies,

cies, which before enslaved us, as will raise our Souls by constant self-denials, to much greater Spiritual delights even here on Earth, which the Regenerate man can only judge of.

XCVI.

[*A Prayer.*]

O Lord prepare my heart to pray, and bless me with contrition, and repentance proportionable to my sins, that my Love, and my Obedience, may now be as great as my crimes, and my neglects have been; who never thought on Thee in all my ways, nor of my Souls Eternity till now, *being led by thy Holy Spirit to pray for Grace to set my heart continually on Thee, my God; that I may know no joy on Earth, like my humble Addresses unto Thee, in my retirements; by which I can only judge of my new love, and gratitude, for thus turning of me from mine Iniquities, and by this miracle of Mercy and Grace, hast snatch'd me up from Hell, into this Heavenly prospect of thine Eternal habitation of Glory.* Lord let these Divine transports in my ap-
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proaches

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proaches unto Thee, wean me from the World, that the remnant of my days may be spent in preparing of my Soul for thy summons to Heaven, that the terrors of the Grave may not divert my frail nature from coming with joy unto Thee, my God, when thou art pleased to call. And I beseech thee, *make this Holy flame burn still brighter and brighter, when I draw near to pray, that my heart may melt with joy for this my Reconciliation, and comfortable hope of Eternal happiness in Heaven; and that I may be so strong with Divine valour, as to welcom Death, that only can conduct me thither.*

XCVII.

WHen God delivers a penitent sinner from the slavery of Satan, to joyce in the freedom and felicity of his service, it is to shew him a glimpse of Heaven, to invite him thither. How great a crime will it then be, for such a man to turn Reprobate again, after such mercy shewn!

XCVIII.

XCVIII.

Nothing does yuine more Souls; then not frequently examining our own hearts strictly, how they stand towards God; and with what sincere delight we serve him, in our Devotions; for the bright flaming zeal of a sincere sigh, will pierce Heaven, when luke-warm words uttered aloud, can find no entrance, nor is at all regarded by Almighty God, who allows us to knock hard at Heaven gates for entrance, when our groaning hearts express our desires; for *He loves to be pressed with violence for his favours, to shew that we value what we pray for.*

XCIX.

Endeavour above all things, while thy Soul is in communion with God, to keep thy affection up to Him; and strive not so much for long eloquent language, as to be heart-wounded, in thy Petitions, for when thy Devotion flags, thy Prayer is done. *We ought always to pray, as if we were that moment to die, which will keep our hearts intent on the great work we are*

about; And he that in praying, can adorn his sorrow for past sins, with penitential tears, before he parts from God, will wash them off, with tears of joy, for that sorrow.

C.

THERE is nothing in our view more destructive to the Souls of men, than the false opinion, that Christianity does impose slavish Laws upon us; as if Piety only consisted in heavy burthens, to be poor miserable dejected Cyphers in the World, made up for sorrows, and sufferings, with self-denial vows against all humane natural fruitions, and felicities; For most men being bred up in these mistaken prejudices, cannot easily be persuaded, that the true Christian Gospel Rules for a Spiritual life, does exceed those carnal appetites we so much struggle for, and the Regenerate man as much despises; in comparison of his Souls continual feasting on the expectation of Heaven, whose firm belief of his Eternal joy, as an adopted Son of God, is a felicity above all the fading enjoyments this World can afford the most ambitious,

ous, luxurious person, who has all that his heart can wish that way. So that no man can have a more chearful Soul, then he whose faith in Christ, and trust in God, makes participate of all the lawful pleasures this World affords; and when piously used, is a delight far above what the wicked can pretend to, when the terrors of an evil conscience must imbitter his fruitions. And this no man can so well judge of, as a converted sinner, become Regenerate, who has tasted, and forsaken the most voluptuous pleasures this World has, for the present joys his Soul finds by Faith in his Eternal Bliss; which shews that a good Christian lives more pleasantly in this World, then a vicious man can do,

CI.

WHEN Christ has wrought his great miracle of Conversion in the hearts of the most obdurate sinners, those near lost men, by his grace becoming truly Regenerate; such Evangelical sincerity will grow in their hearts towards God, as to take more pleasure in his service, then all their past carnal fruitions did afford them:

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So that whoever is enriched with this Grace, will find Divine comforts in their retirements to be alone with God, such as will beget Heavenly Raptures, and preserve their hearts the whole day after from Satanical assaults; and by the custom of such early Morning exercise, will in time beget an habitual delight to begin the day with God, and never forget those high Ejaculations, until they meet the Lord again, to renew and confirm their commerce for Heaven. But it is no wonder, that men generally great sinners, are so hard to be converted, because they cannot set a true value on what they understand not; But most wretched those, who have been thus enlightned, and for some moments rais'd to Heaven; yet are so frail by nature, and by custom prone to evil, as to forsake these Seraphick joys, and return to sordid Earthly fruitions, rather then continue in the assured everlasting joys of Heaven; by persevering in that Righteousness, which they have tasted, and like not.

CII.

THough *David* did commit some great faults, he was a man after God's own heart after that, and one of the best patterns in Holy Writ, fit for us to imitate; for his love, and gratitude to God, who by custom grew to such a pious friendship with his great Maker, *that much of his life was spent with God alone in his retirements, with whom he consulted all his affairs, made all his complaints to, and humbly begged whatever his needs were, with such a familiar trust in God, as his only support, and only delight*: So that if we now consider *David's* great affairs, as a King, full of troubles, ever in Wars, though glorious by his Achievements, yet in frequent dangers, vexed by a stubborn People hard to govern, besides the disorders of his own Family; *so that we may think he omitted no opportunity to be with God*; that hath left so many Psalms full of such high Divine Raptures, extant, to manifest his great piety; that it is a wonder he could get so much time for so many prayers, praises, and contemplations. By which we may learn, that in what

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what calling so ever God has set us, and what troubles so ever He appoints for us, *we may find time to converse with God by day, and night.* So that if we repent, confess, and forsake our sins, with hearts as fervent towards God, as *David* did, no doubt we shall be as well received, though neither Kings, nor Prophets. We may also call to mind, that *David*, as the least considerable person of his Family, had the lowest employment, to keep his Fathers Sheep; yet his heart was then set high on God, or he might have been devoured by that Lion, or that Bear he slew, if God had not been with him. And we may also think, that he was better acquainted with God at his Flock, then *Saul* was on his Throne; else he had not escaped *Saul's* furious malice, and so soon ascended that Throne. By which we may see, that the greatest King, and meanest man, may learn of *David*, to love, serve, honour, worship, and trust in God, with such a delight, as will grow to a friendship with his Creator, and raise his Soul up unto Heaven, whatsoever his employment on Earth is; and those hours, and years of our life, which we trifle away, as a burthen to be rid of, not knowing how to spend idly enough,

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we may imploy as *David* did, and never be alone, when most alone. Thus we may enjoy a happy, and blessed security on Earth; and have a true courage above all such accidents as make ill men tremble. And thus a pious man enjoys a present communion with God, and Christ, by a lively Faith, to such a degree, as doth assure his Soul of Eternal Bliss in Heaven; and when Satan finds us always in such company, he will have small hopes to get an Audience for his Addresses to destroy us. So that if we can live thus like *David*, we may hope to die in God's favour like him; and as chearfully resign our Souls into God's hands, who loves us more then we can love him; and though we cannot reach *David's* highest perfections, as an inspired Prophet, we may like him, give continual thanks to God for all we have, and sing praise, honour, and glory to his Holy Name, whose mercy endureth for ever.

CIII.

DId men watch the deceitfulness of sin, and would heartily check the first appearance of evil thoughts, with the remembrance

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membrance that our All-seeing God is ever present, to observe if we do fight, or do invite our long known Enemies, to their accustomed conquest of us; such precautions would make us either fear to offend, or joy to please our God, and would soon teach our careless hearts, how to subdue those Tyrant appetites afar off, which so often do enslave us, when permitted to approach at a nearer distance; who do hold such a natural intelligence within, that if we but admit a Parley to Treat with those subtle Enemies, they will with fair pretences lead us on, until they undermine our Souls, and blow us up before we can discern the danger we are in; and when once entred at such a Breach, 'tis then too late to grapple with a Foe that is in possession of a Fort without resistance gained. Yet this sad truth by long experience taught, is seldom learnt, because we too much love those glistering Fetters, and consent to put them on before they be imposed; and then fear to be too soon freed from such a pleasant Bondage, vainly thinking we can at our own pleasure shake such shackles off, and be at liberty, until surprized by some unlook'd-for Doom, from whence is no redemption.

CIV.

A Frequent examination of our hearts, is of use to keep men close up to Godliness, and some Rules are very necessary to examine our hearts by, to know when we walk aright, as well to check remissness; as to cherish those Divine motions which do raise hearts up to Heaven, and may keep them there, when so raised; which is a great assurance for flesh and blood when converts; and will beget a joyful hope of being received into God's Bosom, when become so Regenerate as to find a sincere delight to dwell there; which is a great degree of blessedness, and a good assurance that we shall be so for ever in the next World. What labour then, or what time spent can be too much, to obtain Grace to become so universally cleansed from sin, and universally obedient to Gods commands, as will produce a total resignation of our selves, and all our Interests into Gods hands, and keep our hearts close up to Heaven, until we arrive there? For when God is the prime object of our Souls desire, we shall take all opportunities to retire from the World, to converse with God in humble
 Addresses

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Addresses for our Eternal habitation with Him in Glory. But if this Duty of Meditation be used as a servile Drudgery, to avoid a Rod held over us; we are not right at heart, and far from being Regenerate, far from loving God, if we take no delight in being with him; for though Humane Nature cannot reach to Angelical Holiness, yet Evangelical sincerity may be acquired by the Divine assistance, if rightly sought! *and then, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are become the Sons of God;* beyond which, no man can wish, nor think; and when this state of Bliss is obtained, with what diligence ought we to keep it up to the highest pitch of love and gratitude that our fancy, and our Faith can reach; *for by such emanations from the Holy Ghost, we may judge of Gods love to us,* and thereby guess what immense Glory we shall have in Heaven. *And thus we may daily feast our Souls with Angels food, if we can converse with God aright:* So that to be Regenerate, multiplies our joys here, and assures our happiness in Heaven; and though no man can of himself attain to this state of Grace, without the Divine assistance; it is never denied, if sincerely begged; nor was
 ever

ever given in vain to deceive any man,
in the point of being Regenerate.

CV.

WE have no better way to express
our love and gratitude to God,
for all his Mercies and Blessings, then by
our self-denials: For, our obedience to
his Laws is duty, and no virtue to for-
bear a sin that we take no delight in; but
to crucifie a beloved darling Lust, ra-
ther then offend God by it; that is self-
denial: *And unto whomsoever God gives
grace to do so, he gives a joyfull satisfaction
to his Soul for so great a victory, as lays a
firm foundation to raise his Thoughts to
Heaven on:* And is a good argument to
shew that he fears Gods Threats, and
trusts in his Promises, as the greatest
Testimony of an active Faith so much re-
quired; *And when all this is done, our
Christian Warfare is not done;* For when
Carnal sins do cease, and our Appetites
are overcome by Grace, Satan still pur-
sues, in hope to frustrate the felicity of
our Conversion, by disturbing our Piety
with Spiritual Pride, or some Enthusiasms,
to reduce us into his power again. *So that*

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ETO *Mid-night Thoughts.*

when we are best, we must Watch and Pray most, for supplies of Grace to enable us to fight on, lest we end worse then we begun. The sum of all that can be taught, is to bring men to Godliness and Honesty; which is the perfection of Christianity.

CVI.

IT is said in Scripture, *That without holiness, no man shall see the Lord; By which we may observe, that Gods Injunctions are designed for mans greatest Happiness; because Holiness is certainly our only true Felicity in this World; and cannot be less in the next. For if by Righteousness and Faith, we may see a glimpse of Gods Glory here; We shall see him in fulness of Glory at the Resurrection; and enjoy him too on Christs account.*

CVII.

NO man did ever seek God with a sincere heart, that missed to find him; God loves to be so sought, and to be so found, as we shall be sure we have found him by our delight in him: All which is the work of the Holy Ghost within us, to our great
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Mid-night Thoughts. III

comfort here, always to enjoy God, if our delight be set on him! above all earthly fruitions. And thus we may find God, and enjoy him as well in Courts of Princes, as in a Wilderness, if we prefer nothing before the finding of him; and so the greatest Courtiers may live like Saints on Earth, and be Saints in Heaven when they die.

CVIII.

TIs not amiss for a Righteous man sometimes to fancy himself on his Death-Bed, with his Friends bewailing his departure from them; while he pities their mistake, who pities him, that is going to see the face of God, in the face of Death; and to meet Christ, who with open Arms comes to receive his Soul into his Eternal rest; *Such Meditations will raise our hearts to endeavour to die so, and will bring us great Consolation while we live so, in Gods favour, that our Faith fail not at the last gasp.*

CIX.

THere is no Felicity like Piety, no Peace, no Security, no Conversation, *no diversions can come into competition with a Divine Life, and Divine Love to God;* So to fix our Interest in this world, and the next; for we shall fall as we live, and shall rise to everlasting Judgment as we fall; *For though Christ came into the world to call, and to enable the greatest of sinners to become capable of this Felicity here, and Salvation after;* We must repent and forsake our Iniquities, or can have no part in him.

CX.

WE cannot make too strict a Covenant with our Eyes and Hearts to watch the deceitfulness of Sin; And observe how every look, and every thought, is naturally apt insensibly to convert innocent intentions, into evil; before we discern the subtle enemy undermining of our Souls, with the fair appearances of harmless diversions, if too much indulged! until they become destroying Snares.

CXI.

CXI.

GOD often treats his professed Lovers, as we do one another, when we find that a professed friend has some concealed Jewel that he prizes above his professions; though he offer up all the rest which we desire not; we reject his Complement, and still desire to have that reserved beloved Jewel which he values above our Favours. And so God rejects all our Complemental Services, *until our reserved darling Lust be offered up to him,* as the Jewel we most prize, and the only sacrifice he will accept; *Then in return, of our whole hearts, he will give himself to us for ever.*

CXII.

LET him that thinks he stands most fixed in Heaven, take heed lest he fall; and remember that *David*, and *Solomon*, (both of them Gods Favorites) could not stand longer then by his Grace supported; nor were our Saviours beloved Disciples, all free from stumbling; by which, and many more examples, we are

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taught not to presume on our own righteousness; but to look on our Frailties as inherent to us, lest Dust and Ashes should presume on our own performances, without continual Addresses to God for such Supplies as we do every moment need. And we may also think that God permits some good men to some relapses, to awaken, and quicken them to the frequent duty of his Worship, so to own him, that no man may hope to serve him as he ought, without him. For Satan is most busie and ambitious to reduce a Convert out of Christs flock, to become his slave again; rather then to continue his Celestial freedom; such a victory he accounts his Master-piece, so to subdue careless men, who too much trust unto their own Integrity, and take no heed how they stand, lest they fall.

Some think on **CXIII.**
WE cannot Pray too often, because
 frequent sincere Prayers do
 bring down Blessings from Heaven; but
 when we make negligent Addresses, they
 shew such a disrespect, that the Glorious
 Majesty we approach, turns from us,
 in

in contempt of such careless Petitions. For when we are excited to Divine Worship by the Holy Ghost, God looks for such intention of Spirit, with vigour in our Devotion, that shews how much we value what we pray for; He admits of our frequent zeal at all times, though he sees our unworthiness, and never fails to cherish an humble contrite Spirit, when he rejects a presumptuous Babbler. So that when we approach to Pray, our first Petition should be, for Grace to prevent all diversions from Satan, and our selves, who where his publick temptations fail, is ever busie to disturb our Devotions with frivolous or foul suggestions.

CXIV:

HOW can we think that God doth believe the frequent Professions we make, that we love Him above all things, when we forsake him so often for trivial, and vain fruitions? for though no man is free from such Frailties, as we ought to Watch, and Pray for amendment of by Grace from above! For to be absolutely perfect, is impossible; because our Nature will not admit of such Angelical per-

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perfection; yet no man ought to question his sincerity, because he cannot do, that which is impossible for men to do.

CXV.

WE spend much of our time in laying foundations for Happiness on Earth; when our Happiness is, that we have none here, but what we can raise from our Hopes to find in Heaven; which we are seldom inclined to think on, but when we find we are not so well provided for here, as we Hope to be there.

CXVI.

ALL men know that every moment of our Lives, every step we make, does advance us towards the Grave; but we do not seriously enough consider of this our greatest concern, while we march on with merry hearts towards our Eternal Habitation of Rest, and happiness in Heaven; (as we think) but in our careless journey thither, do entertain our Souls with such worthless Vanities, or such known Wickedness, for our Diversions;

versions ; that we do often mistake the way, if not quite lose it, and so arrive at a dismal Habitation of Woe, before we see whither we are going.

CXVII.

WE cannot Love, or Fear God too much, we cannot Thank Him, or Trust in Him too much, nor Think of Him too often, from whom we have all that we enjoy, and on whose free Mercy our Eternal Doom depends; and this Moment may be that Doom to every one of us. *So then he is the most Happy man in this World, that Lives ever the most ready to Die ; With a sincere desire to be with God ; which is a sure mark of his Reconciliation, and Adoption ; To love God thus, and to be thus beloved of Him, will bring us to delight in God above all his Creatures, which is the highest Felicity our Piety can aim at.*

CXVIII.

[A Prayer.]

Lord Enrich all Hearts with Divine Love, that desire it, and inflame their

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their Souls with such desires towards Thee, as to Live Righteously, and to value such enlightning Comforts as flow from those Transports thou doest afford unto Reconciled sinners, become Regenerate; so to encourage them to Inform, and Reclaim such as go Astray, by seeing the vast delights that do attend thine Adopted Sons, in their way to Heaven; *And by that bright Light from above, to judge of thy Celestial Joys prepared for them there.*

CXIX.

NOt to think at all, is impossible, and to think too much of what we ought not to think of, is too Natural to us; but to think of the Everlasting Torments in Hell, comparatively with our petty short Pains here, will Fright us into some Care not to offend God so, as to send us thither: *But to think of the Joys of Heaven as we ought, and by our Faith in Christ to bring us thither; with our Love to God, our Christian Charity, our Purity of Heart, and our Humility to God and Man; Which is the Divine Lovers part, who is ever thinking on his Eternal*

nal Bliss, and how to please God most, so to prepare for Heaven, which he sees every moment is at hand; and the joyful expectation of that Happy Hour, is his Souls continual Consolation; as those will find, who do Sincerely labour for it.

CXX.

IT is one of the Devils chief Arts, to cheat men into a belief that it is a Melancholly thing to be Religious; But a man truly Regenerate, will need no other arguments to convince the contrary, than what he finds in his own Heart of Delight, when the Holy Ghost has taken possession there; and when his Retirements with God, will furnish him so fully with his Loving Kindness, and those Enlightning Gifts, those Beatifying Graces, and Refreshing Comforts, those Divine Manifestations of his presence, creating such a Joy, with such Peace of Conscience, that no Carnal Appetites, nor all the Malice of Men and Devils, can remove him from his firm Station of Bliss, which he participates of in this prospect of Heaven only. But no man can believe this, nor guess at the Felicity of a Pious Life, until he do obtain Grace to become Regenerate.

CXXI.

Whoever considers that his day of Death, is his day of Judgment, for his Eternal Being; will find that his time yet to Live, is little enough to ask God Pardon for the time he has mispent; Whoever doth closely and seriously set to this great work of Conversion, will find that his Sighs and Tears, will produce more Joy in his Latter-days, then re-acting his former Crimes would be, when the two Eternities are put into the Scales.

CXXII.

Let us not please our selves with presumptuous Thoughts, *That we are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, till we have examined our Hearts strictly, to find if we are free from all Habitual Sins, in Thought, Word, and Deed; for God will not dwell in a Polluted Temple: We must next examine what proportion of Divine Joy, the Holy Spirit fills our New Hearts with, to Confirm, and Sanctify our Souls, in the Love, and Service of God, thus dwelling in us;*
and

And then observe, what a new kind of entertainment it is, to Delight in God, with the peace of a quiet Conscience; which by frequent Meditations, will hold us up above the reach of any storms, that Satan can raise, or the malice of Men can contrive against us; And then we are to fix all this Happiness, by worthy receiving of the Holy Sacrament, So as Christ may be Born within us, and be so United unto us, as to confirm our Spiritual Pillar: Thus qualified, we may look on ourselves as Temples of the Holy Ghost; In all humility rejoicing to be so Blessed, when we are so.

CXXIII.

WE ought to enter Caverns in our Hearts, against the approaches of such sorts of Temptations as we fear most, and on all occasions, to search the Register of our Vows made to God; to see if we do not stand pre-engaged to Him, to resist the Temptation then Assaulting us; and if so, how unworthy shall we be so to break our Word with God, upon Record; and how dangerous to provoke his anger by such a Contempt; thus we may

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destroy many designs from Satan, and our selves oftentimes the worse Devil of the two.

CXXIV.

WE are too often abused by flattering diversions, *as if Holy Meditations were not more pleasant, and more durable, then vain delights;* Which rob us of our real Essential Joys, for shadows of Pleasures, that ever abuse us.

CXXV.

WE ought often to consider of how little value all is, that we have on Earth, which we must for ever depart from when we die; and should therefore set our selves to secure a Blessed Eternity where we go; *And which God invites us to, on the easie terms of repenting our past sins;* and forsaking those Crimes, which we have been so often cloyed with.

CXXVI.

CXXVI.

L Et thy Spiritual Resurrection from sin; (which is Gods works within thee.) assure thy reconciliation, and confirm thy Election, so as to fill thy heart with bright flames of a sincere Evangelical Devotion; that thou mayest live and serve God cheerfully, until thy time comes to die; And then with a Holy valour pass through the Grave with a lively Faith to participate of His Glory, at the Resurrection; For by a ready submission, thou wilt Conquer that great Tyrant Death, by a foresight of those Celestial joys, that raise thy Soul to know thou shalt be with God, the moment that thou diest.

CXXVII.

WE ought to Pray continually for the Holy Ghost to dwell in us; to inform and enable us to do our duty in all things, with the Spirit of Faith; which will improve our zeal, and to contemn this Worlds Glories, and will fill our hearts with higher thoughts for a joyful

expectation of a Crown in Heaven, prepared for those who value it.

CXXVIII.

WE should always have in mind when *the Spirit and the Flesh contest within us*; That our Will is the Judge between those two Solicitors, and that God leaves the option of our Eternal Bliss, or Eternal Woe to us; that is, whether we will become Spiritual Disciples, or Carnal Sinners; for no Temptations can make us guilty, unless we consent to sin.

CXXIX.

THe greatest argument against Despair, and for a Pious Life, is very short: *That if we do repent, and forsake our sins, with a sincere universal obedience for the future; we shall be as certain to partake of Gods promised Mercies, as if we had never gone on in those former sins; Though great and frequently repeated, which is great comfort unto all such as Hope to go to Heaven.*

CXXX.

CXXX.

THe generality of mankind, do spend most part of their Lives, on the delightful Acquisition of Wealth, Honour, Learning, or the like; and are but unskillful Merchants, that purchase Rich Jewels, with more hazards, and at higher Rates, then their intrinsick value will afford them to be gainers by, when obtained. And for which, we pay most part of our precious time, that is the only Treasure we have; and of much more worth, then all we can purchase in this World, by the profuse expence of that time, on such glistening Trifles as must perish with us, if not before us; *When a tenth part of our mispent time, would procure Eternal Wealth, Honour and Joy beyond expression for our Immortal Souls, if we would devoutly Traffick for Heaven.* But we are naturally inclined to set our hearts on present Fruitions, more then a hundred times their value in reversion; because Heaven is, or may be far off, and we have time enough to think of that, when we have nothing else to do; though this minute we may

be called to our Eternal Doom; and too late find the difference between a Reprobate, and a Regenerate Life.

CXXXI.

A Man truly Regenerate, will not admit of the least contest from Carnal Appetites, his heart being so fixed on Heavenly joys, that he detests all approaches to divert him, as below the pleasure he has in his Conversation with God in private; Who he believes will assuredly bring him to Heaven, if he prefer his Service, before the fading Bubbles of this World.

CXXXII.

OF all the Blessings that God bestows on men, There is none greater than the Peace of Conscience, which a Pious man finds when he is dying with great comfort; And which ought to invite all men to live Divine Lives, with assurance that God sees our sincerity, and gives sufficient grace accordingly, at the hour of Death.

CXXXIII.

CXXXIII.

A Great Reprobate, (by the Grace of God) become Regenerate, can experimentally judge how much the felicity of Piety doth exceed his former Epicurisms: Men in this World, without putting Eternity into the Scales, against moments; and observes that the continual tranquillity of a quiet Conscience is much more pleasant, then all his past unlawful Fruitions, attended with such Terrors as a guilty Soul is loaded with.

CXXXIV.

EVery Pious man that has forsaken his sins, for fear to offend God, who he pretends to love also; does begin well: And when God sees his sincerity to obey him in all things, He will not let him rest there, but adds Faith and Grace till his heart longs for a nearer Communion with Christ in Heaven; and by a daily custom of such elevated Meditations, God will bring this Pious man to despise this World, and to overcome the Terrors of the Grave, by his expectation of Heaven, where his Soul longs to be.

CXXXV.

GXXXV.

WE must not desire to die, to be rid of affliction here; *But if we can obtain Grace for so Divine a Love to God, as to be glad to go to Him, when He calls for us; That will be enough, and such holy courage at the hour of death, will bring great Joy to our expiring Souls.*

CXXXVI.

THe Souls of Righteous men, are said to be with God the moment they expire; But to what degree of Bliss they are admitted before the Resurrection, is not revealed unto men; *But it is enough for us to believe that God takes care of those Souls that served, and trusted in Him, as well as for his departed Saints; We need to desire no more then to be with them.*

CXXXVII.

THe Design of Reading the Scriptures, Preaching, Praying, and Fasting, is to bring us to lead such Pious Lives,

Lives, as may shew our Faith and Love to God; And so to divert our hearts from Worldly vanities, by constant Meditations on the Joys of Heaven, to invite us thither: And also encourage our timorous Souls with grace from above, to contemn the Grave, where they shall not rest one moment. Which if well considered, our Holy Resolutions would scarce to fear, and shrink back from the last step we must make, to take possession of the Crown we seem to labour for, which will shew that we have but cold desires to be with God.

CXXXVIII.

NO Regenerate man can be mistaken in Gods Service, who sets his Heart sincerely to that work; for God who sees our hearts throughout, will not lose such a Votary; but will Sanctify his zeal, and make him see that an humble contrite heart, is the Sacrifice He likes; And will shew by his returns of Comfort, and Consolation to such a man, that his Soul will be transported with Raptures of joy, in his Divine Contemplations; when he finds such inward assurance of Gods favour, that

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that he cannot doubt of his Reconciliation, when thus enriched with Grace, and throled by the Holy Ghost, his devout heart will rise higher, with bright flames of Love, aspiring to get into Christs bosom.

CXXXIX.

WE should in our Meditations, often reflect on the unquiet, and uncertain wealth and Honours of this World, and how unworthy such fleeting fruitions are, to be preferred before Eternal felicities; that so we may not set our hearts, and spend our time on such vain acquisitions, when immortal happiness will be had on easier, and more certain terms, and we surely become the Sons of God.

CXL.

THe greatest business of our Lives is to learn to die with holy courage, and not to start from the Grave, nor repine at such means and methods, as our kind God appoints, to make us willing to come to Him, and by such gentle corrections, to withdraw us from the World, *that our hearts may be always working up towards*

towards his Throne of Mercy; where Christ has purchased places for converted sinners, amongst the Angels, and has appointed his Holy Spirit to invite, and conduct us thither, by his inward comforts which grow from the Gospel-promises, (and is the Christian Faith) that repented sins forsaken, shall not be charged on us in this World, nor the next; which is the foundation of Divine valour in a dying convert.

CXLI.

THe generality of mankind, are naturally inclined to love those who love them, and to judge of Friendship and Hatred, by the assisting or crossing our designs in this World; and the universal object herein, is Death: So then we are to consider the real effects of this great Monarchs power, that controuls the World, and see whether he be a more general Friend, or Enemy to mankind: For as he cuts down some in their first Buds, others in the prime Blossoms of their youth, and surprizes many of riper years, by hurrying them into unexpected destruction, from such Wealth, and Honours, as their
carnal

carnal hearts were most delighted with; yet the same Death, is kind to the most of men, who are oppressed with various sorts of Agonies, both of mind and body, beyond the cure of the best Remedies, until by Death released from all degrees of maladies, and miseries. *Now if all this be well considered, we may bring our selves to such an acquaintance with this mighty Monarch Death, by a daily conversation, and preparation for our submission to his irresistible command, so as to rejoyce when we are freed from future evils, and by Death conducted to our Eternal Rest. And the same moment that our Souls expire, we shall conquer Him, who conquers all the World; and for ever Triumph over his Victories over us. So that 'tis our weak Faith, and frail Nature, that makes Death seem so terrible an Enemy unto unrighteous men only.*

Who would thou shouldst see, how the power of death is overcome by a more glorious victory: that is, by the victory of the soul over the body.

CXLI.

THe true joy of a good Soul in this world, is the very joy in Heaven, only there 'tis superinvested with Glory, which a Righteous man enjoys that moment he dies, without any stop by the way.

CXLI.

CXLIII.

THere is nothing more worthy of our continual thoughts, our utmost endeavours, and hearty prayers, *then to obtain the Blessedness to become Regenerate: For when the Holy Ghost sanctifies the heart of such a man, with the comfortable marks of his Reconciliation, and Adoption, that man will soon find the continual feast of a good conscience while he lives, to be more pleasant then all other things which this World affords; and at his hour of death, the felicity of his Adoption will fill his Soul with holy valour, and accompany him to his Everlasting Glory. Which joy no mortal fancy can conceive, and is the highest works of our strongest Faith to think on, and to prepare for.*

CXLIV.

HE that can upon examination, find such comfort in his Soul, as to be ever ready and willing to appear at the day of Judgment, *must be enlightened and guided by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified by a Spiritual Resurrection from sin to grace,*

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and from all worldly temptations ; so as his chief delight, *will be in a Divine conversation with God, by frequent approaches,* for the continuance of such mercies as have so raised him from the terrors of Hell, unto the joys of Heaven.

CXLV.

THe truly Pious man, is always blowing up his smoking Flax, to flaming Love, for those daily mercies and blessings he receives from God ; so to teach others the felicity he finds therein, to invite them to Heaven.

CXLVI.

TO hear, to read, to write and meditate, and to pray often, are the means to understand our Duty unto God, as also to fix our Faith : But if we do not live and practise accordingly, our great knowledge will aggravate our crimes, and provoke God's anger against us, *for slighting those Divine Instructions, which the Holy Ghost inspires us with,* and for which God expects an account from us.

CXLVII.

CXLVII.

HE that can make a total resignation of himself, with all his Interests, into God's hands, has made a great advance towards Heaven, and may trust in God; *so the foundation of his Trust, be laid deep in a fixed heart, on a Spiritual Resurrection, universally cleansed from all known sins, and so Reconciled, that God will accept of the Trust:* But we are too apt to mistake such Resignations, and to flatter our selves with Peace of Conscience on that account, without a due Examination, whether all our actions and affections, do justify such a Resignation as we offer up to God; without which, it is a great presumption to pretend to Trust in God.

CXLVIII.

TO be Regenerate, does include all Blessedness that we are capable of in this World, with a joyful prospect into those Eternal felicities we shall have in Heaven; and is a sure Testimony of our Reconciliation.

CXLIX.

THere is nothing more clear, then that Holiness is the foundation of true Happiness, even in this World, and cannot be doubted in the next; for whoever lives a Divine life, will have his heart full of Divine love to God; and then will soon find the felicity of Piety; to be so much more pleasant then all other Diversions, that he will take all the opportunities he can, *both day and night to approach God in Holy Meditations, and humble Prayers,* as the most delightful entertainment his Soul is capable of on this side Heaven; and will find God's favour confirmed to him, by Grace sufficient to support his contented heart through all the Storms this World can raise; and fill him with joyful thoughts of his Salvation at the hour of death, which is our highest Aim, by the perfection of Piety to obtain.

CL.

[*A Prayer.*]

Lord give us Grace to discern the bottom of our own hearts, that we be not

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not deceived by too slight a search for Divine Love there; nor flatter our selves with hopes of being Favourites in Heaven, while we prefer thy Creatures before Thee, and see it not. *Lord guide us by thy Divine Light*, and make us see that true Devotion is the most satisfying diversion we can have; and will enrich our hearts with desires to be with Thee in Paradise, and will create courage to pass chearfully through the Grave, so to justify our Faith, by our last step out of this World, into a glorious Eternity with Thee our God.

CLL.

IF we consider how many times we have stumbled, in our Christian course, and how many times fallen, and by what small Rubs been overthrown, we should take more care to stumble no more at such Straws; but pray for Grace to enable us to run over all 'Mountainous temptations; if they cross our way to Heaven; and when God sees a vigorous sincerity to serve, love, and trust in Him, He is then ready to support us through the whole course of our lives; which no

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man can doubt of, that observes how God admits of our many risings, after so many great and wilful falls as most men make; and yet He still invites us to repair past Evils, by running out our new course better, with a due prospect to our last step into the Grave, from whence we must arise to claim the Crown we run for. And this will raise all devout hearts, to the brightest flame of Faith, and Love, that men are capable of, when we consider that every moment of our life, may be that last step, by which we must gain, or lose the Crown we run for.

CLII.

BEcause Angelical obedience is a perfection of Holiness above the capacity of Humane Nature, God does make allowance for sincerity in performance of Duties; but Himself holds the Scales, to see that our sincerity be full weight, according to the grains He allows us. *And the Holy Ghost within us*, has a continual Treasury, where those grains are so reposed, as to be ever ready to supply our sincerity, and to turn the Scales for our advantage, according to every
man

mans utmost endeavours, which will never be rejected for want of weight.

CLIII.

L Et no man despair of the forgiveness of his sins, if he do confess them to God, and do turn from them to Him with sincere contrition, and repentance, devoutly practised for the future, in Obedience, Love, and Faith, trusting in Gods Mercy and Grace, with our reliance on Christs Righteousness imparted unto us; on which assurance, we may live with comfort, and die with joy. And whoever doth entertain himself with such frequent Meditations, will find them to be the most delightful diversions he can have, to consider that though we may fail in our best endeavours, Gods Mercy and Christs Righteousness can never fail, can never be exhausted on our sins, by supporting sincere Penitents, until brought unto Heaven; so that in this high expectation of future Eternal Bliss, we ought to be contented with our Lots on Earth, whatever they be; trusting in Gods free Mercy, and Christs Merits, without despairing of our Salvation, if

we

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we can repent past crimes, and forsake them for the future : *But if we have not a Resurrection from sin in this World, we shall have no Resurrection to Glory in the next World.*

CLIV.

Piet̃y and Faith, include all Christia-
nity ; but we often mistake Praying,
Preaching, and Godly talk, for Piet̃y,
which are but steps towards it ; for we
are obliged to do Righteousness, or else
we are not of God : and so it is with
those who think their Faith sufficient, that
can (Parrot-like) repeat their Creed ;
when 'tis our active Faith that is requi-
red, to do what the Gospel teaches. So
that if a due regard to Faith, and Piet̃y
be settled in our hearts, *we should find
more time for Meditations on those great
concerns, whatever our Callings, or Im-
ployments be ; for our Bodies cannot be
so engag'd to labour, or in any Court-
crouds so imploy'd, but our Souls may
be raised up to God in fervent Ejacula-
tions, without any Tongue-noise, or Face-
discovery, to inform God, who knows
our hearts better then our selves do. So
that :*

that by Faith, and Piety, *we may converse with God here*, and begin our Eternal happiness on Earth.

CLV.

IT is a wonder to see that all mankind should be loth to leave this World, where so few are truly happy, or that think themselves so; (as to be contented:) The weak Old sick man, would live on in pains; the strong and healthy Youth, the Rich, the Poor, the great in Titles and Commands, the Mighty Princes, and their Slaves, all of all sorts are subject to repine, to Envy, and to Malice, Revenge, and Avarice, to Ambition, or some other discontent that robs their hearts of peace; and yet all desire to live on: though our days, if justly divided! we should find three parts of four, allotted unto cares, fears, troubles, and sorrows; and the remaining part, entertained with shadows of delight, to mock our senses, rather than such real pleasures as can affect our Souls; and yet no time, no arguments; no examples, nor our own daily experience, can divert our frail Natures from this infelicity, which
was.

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was created with us, by a mighty Providence, to shew that our time of Sojourning here, must not afford any thing of value to divert our hearts from aiming at our Eternal habitation of Rest ; where we are to expect more felicity, then we now know how to wish for. *But this the Regenerate man can only understand, who knows the felicity of Piety,* and finds there is no security on Earth, but in loving, fearing, and serving God, which assures him of a place in Heaven, and gives him a comfortable passage thither.

CLVI.

IF men did consider their Christian calling, and the miraculous Plantation of the Gospel of Christ, by twelve illiterate men, *who were taught by the Spirit of God,* for the conversion of the then Heathen World ; we should now have more active Faith, then generally appears by the lives of men ; for though we are not called to a severe bloody Martyrdom, as in the Primitive Age, to justify our Faith by Torments unto death : But by the great mercy of God, our required Martyrdom is now so gentle, in comparison

rison of their sufferings, that we are only called to Obedience, and Faith; only to own what those Blessed Martyrs died for. So that if we prefer Gods Glory and his Service, before our own Carnal Appetites, we shall resist all temptations to Lust, and Vanities, which offend God, and destroy our present felicity also. When this easie happy Martyrdom of sin, is only required of us, to repent past crimes, and forbear to repeat them; we shall receive in lieu thereof, Gods favour here, and Eternal Joy in Heaven.

CLVII.

A Frequent consideration of our state towards God, shews us the best prospect towards Heaven, and doth teach us the way thither; and begets holy desires on the expectation of our future joys; and such consideration also, gives us the prospect of those everlasting flames that attend us in Hell, if we run on in sinning; and will terrifie our hearts with the expectation of future Torments, if we neither value Gods promises, nor fear his threats: So that nothing can be more concern to mankind, then frequent
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and serious consideration, of all we say,
do, and think.

CLVIII.

TO fear to die, is a contradiction to our Faith, and all the zeal we profess to God, when we fear to be with Him in Glory; and by which, we undervalue Christs purchase of a place in Heaven for us, by preferring our abode here, before Eternal happiness with Him, which we can never obtain but by dying.

CLIX.

NO considerate man can pretend to fear God, and do what he is sure will offend Him; nor can he think that he loves God, when by committing wilful known sins, he contemns his Laws; nor can he believe that he has any argument to trust in God, who does neither love, fear, nor serve him as he ought; nor can pretend to any parcel of Divine Grace, or comfort in death, if he live and die in his habitual course of sinning.

CLX.

CLX.

WHy do Christians fear to die, but because we do not live after Christian Principles; which neglect, begets infidelity, and makes us doubt to go unto Christ, else we could not fear to be with Him, who sits at Gods right hand in Heaven; and where we may participate of his Eternal Glory, if we live after his Gospel Rules here; by which we shall scorn the terrors of Death, and make our days on Earth also as happy, as long. But if we go on in Voluptuous Iniquities, pamper'd up for the day of Slaughter, 'twill be no wonder that we tremble at our Dissolution, and the approach of the terrible day of Judgment. But if we live ready to die, and fit to step into Eternity; the Grave will prove easier, then a long life, if compared with the short pleasures of our best Worldly enjoyments, that keep our hearts from Heaven.

CLXI:

Frequent consideration of our Eternity,
 does beget a due examination of our
 O hearts,

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hearts, whether God be there, to direct and support us in our way to Heaven; or if Satan governs, what a dismal Eternity we are hasting to; so that to have God always in our sight, by a frequent examination of our hearts, we may check the first appearance of Evil, with the thought of Eternal condemnation; but if Goodness inhabit here, then to cherish such thoughts, as will blow the holy Fire into flaming Zeal, and declare an Interest in Christ: And by a daily custom thus to retire and consider of our Salvation, will fill our hearts with such a pleasing habit of Holiness, as will bring God home to us, who will not permit a wicked thought where He is pleased to dwell.

CLXII.

I*F we did duly consider that our transparent hearts, do shew our most secret thoughts to God, we should not so often provoke him to Anger, by putting our evil thoughts into action; this would be of great use, if by practices we can bring our hearts to be as transparent to our selves, as they are to God; and would in a little time obtain Grace to cast out wicked*

wicked fancies, as fast as Satan can suggest them; or our own fancies create them; which then would leave no stings behind, to poison hearts so strongly guarded.

CLXIII.

WE ought to be ever mindful that true Religion, is to lead a Divine Life, and will beget Divine Love in our hearts to God, and to endeavour to endear our selves so, as to become capable of his Love to us, though we can never be worthy of it, we shall not fail to have it, if we sincerely desire it.

CLXIV.

THe Gospel says, that our Saviour died to satisfy God for the sins of all mankind, that truly repent, and amend, and do stedfastly believe that if we do so, all our sins, how many and how great so ever, shall be forgiven us. We must then enquire of our own hearts, for the truth of our repentance, whether we shall find Arguments to doubt, or to believe our selves, to be in the number of them that

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Christ came to bless, by turning us from our Iniquities; and then it will be our Duties, as an effect of our Faith, to believe we are amongst such penitent sinners as Christ has Redeemed with his Blood, and will be no presumption to think we shall have places in Heaven on His account, if we come to God by Him; and may also have an humble assurance in our own hearts, of such a joyful Resurrection, as will allay the terrors of Death, and give us a chearful passage to his Eternal Bliss; and thus Pious Penitents may die chearfully, without presuming on their own Justification, and less assurance than this, may prove a groundless despair, on our diffidence in Gods promises, or an undervaluing of Christs Merits, and Intercession for us; on which our Repentance, and Conversion is grounded, and our Salvation depends.

CLXV.

Consideration has a vast extent, it reaches all past time, and looks on towards Eternity to come; it searches into Hell, and up to Heaven, and humbly con-

consults the glorious Attributes of God, and teaches us how to know, and obey his Will ; it enquires into the bottom of our own hearts, and the fathomless thoughts of our unbounded fancies, how they stand towards the Obedience we profess to God ; And if on a full consideration of all our ways, we find our hearts fixed on God, it does produce Divine consolations, it entertains and satisfies us with a continual variety of joyful objects to enlarge our Souls on, suitable to the great end we aim at. So that consideration is the greatest and most useful Lesson, that was ever taught to man ; and the most delightful study we can practice, to make our troublesom travels in this World easie to us, by our constant expectation of Eternal Joy, and Glory at our Journeys end ; which requires much consideration how to reach, lest we miss our way thither. *He that retires to consider what he must do to be saved, makes his Religion his business, for without retirement, our thoughts flow at large ; but in retired Holy Meditations, some awe and reverence does seize on the Soul, which while that Pulse beats, declares it to be alive, and active, in searching for its Salvation,*

vation, and never fails of finding those comforts it seeks in this World, by the assurance of Glory in the next.

CLXVI.

IF the felicity of Piety were generally understood, men would make more haste to become Regenerate; that in our assaults from Satan, and injuries from men, we might Triumph in such Storms, as terrifie the hearts of impious Livers: But above all, if we consider an impenitent habitual sinner, on his Death-bed, full of despair: through the horror of his Crimes, and apprehension of the Hell he is falling into; and at the same time observe a converted sinner, reconciled to God long before, now delivering up his Soul unto his Saviour, with a fixed Faith, and a chearful heart, hasting to take possession of a blessed Seat in Heaven, prepared for him; it must needs invite the lookers on to cleansing, and reconciling to God before Death surprize us. This great concern for our Eternity, is in few words thus: God has pronounced, that impenitent sinners shall not enter into Heaven, nor shall true peni-

penitents be shut out; which confirms the felicity of Piety, unto a Regenerate man.

CLXVII.

FAith ever was, and ever will be the foundation of Religion; for no man can worship what he believes is not, nor can endeavour to please, or fear to offend he knows not who, nor what, nor why; so that we must believe there is some Divine Existence from whence all things are, and by which all things subsist, and we among the rest are what we are: From these natural reasonings, and notions, we enquire into Traditions, and by searching the Holy Scriptures, we are powerfully taught concerning God, Christ, and Holy Ghost, and there also learn to improve our Faith; to believe the Resurrection after death, and that if we do live Righteously, we shall when we die, participate of that glorious Being, in the Eternal presence of our incomprehensible Creator. The next step our Faith leads us towards Heaven is, from the consideration that our Dust and Ashes is entertain'd on Earth with so great pomp,

pomp, and such high delights, that we must believe, and expect that our Immortal Souls will have much greater transporting Joys in Heaven, then our flesh is capable of, until refined for the Day of Judgment : And if thus by pious living, we can raise our Faith to trust in Christs merits, and intercession, 'twill bring us unto an humble confidence of our Salvation when we die ; which cannot be had but from above, and such Grace from God, will encourage us to look more kindly on Death, who only can conduct us to this everlasting Joy we believe in, and hope for. *So that by such Meditations of Heaven,* Death will become so familiar an acquaintance, as not to fright us from going to God in His company, and will in our last hour, support those Souls with comfort, whose sincerity God sees, through all our failings, and accepts of.

CLXVIII.

TIs a wonder to see what pains men take, and what hazards run, to gain perishing wealth, to entertain our Bodies with, which are more perishing then

then the wealth we seek, and all that time, neglect our Immortal Souls for their Eternity. And though Time be our great concern, we value nothing less, but vex our Brains, and study still how to be rid of what we cannot keep, nor ever can recall : And though from day to day we are cloy'd with our fruitions, and tired with new delights, even worn out with various diversions, yet in our whole lives never can afford a few minutes time to gain true Rest ; but still from Age to Age intice, and betray our Souls unto new vanities, till youth and vigour is decayed ; and then too, revive our dead appetites with fresh budding idle fancies, (often worse then all that went before) until we are surpriz'd by Death, and hurried into Eternity, before we do see our selves old enough to be at leasure to think of that Grave, which is every moment ready to swallow us : whereas, if we did set our selves at first to resist all Assaults from Satan, with a pious vigour, and observe it, we shall find and feel great pleasure in every Victory over every Temptation, which formerly did enslave and triumph over us. And then, what honour, what ambition can be greater,

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greater, then to conquer so great a Conqueror? and by practice, thus improving our Divine Military skill this way, we shall raise daily Trophies so acceptable to God, that we shall discern our Souls climbing up to Heaven thereon.

CLXIX.

IT is worthy consideration, how many men do spend their whole lives in reading Books, to learn what has been done of old, thereby to instruct the present Age, and to inform the future; and when by much study, and by time grown decrepit, they slip into their Graves with the most ignorant, and do there create, and feed their own Worms, who understand not that great wisdom, so much labour'd for; and then too late such Learned men will find, that more advantage might have been made, *by studying themselves, (ne're thought on)* still labouring for a few bubbles of momentary praise, as of more use, then to secure Eternal Bliss for their immortal Souls. *Self-study is a continual Inquisition on our own hearts, to consider all our thoughts, how they work towards a good, or a bad end,*

end, and then to cherish or suppress them as they arise; for some appear in forms at first sight so ugly, they cannot be too soon smothered, and some so disguised in pleasing shapes, as may deceive a careless heart, if not acquainted with the marks they wear; and that way Armed, and well warned by former harms, so as to avoid new wounds from Enemies so dangerous, that we must not Treat, nor dally with, but make them Retreat by a brisk Charge, and bold Defie. We are also to study to discover another sort of Foes, more dangerous then all the rest, who lye in close Ambush, until some opportunity do call them forth for an Assault; and are of form so lovely, and so innocent in shew, that Charity her self would warm their cold Limbs in her own Bosom, and not discern the danger, until these cunning Serpents bite beyond resistance, and then declare for the Supremacy over the whole man; and then muster up all his senses, and all his faculties against himself, and thus steal a Victory, by corrupting those Guards that were given for his defence. So that by a long negligence, we grow so ignorant of our selves, that every assault from Satan,

shakes

shakes the whole man, until at last he
 Roots him up for ever : But if our Eter-
 nal Being is considerable, we should allow
 some time to study our own natural in-
 clinations, and affections to good or evil ;
 and to learn such Rules as may rectifie
 our senses, to submit unto our more ra-
 tional Souls, *when led by Grace to work*
upward towards God, which will teach
 us the wisdom of Salvation, and raise our
 Faith to such dependance on Christ, as
 no worldly Learning can contest for the
 priority. Let us then imploy our time so,
 as to learn to know our selves, and our
 duty unto God, in which our everlasting
 happiness is most concerned.

CLXX.

T *Here can be no better Arguments for*
frequent Meditations, then to think
 seriously of our sins, of Death, and our
 Resurrection to Judgment, as we ought ;
 and to prepare for so great a concern, at
 a minutes call to step into Eternity ; so
 ready, that we may so love God, and
 fear Him, as to serve him with delight
 here, and to have Celestial joy when we
 expire.

CLXXI.

CLXXI.

NO man ought to think himself above the reach of temptation; for when Satan finds us but a little relaxed in our Devotion, or any thing cold in our affection to God, he can dress an old forsaken sin, so like to an Angel of Light, as to surprize a young Divine Lover at first sight, (when his Guards are withdrawn) but when his Beloved sees him in such danger, *He will by His Divine guiding Light, unmask the disguised Fiend,* and so reclaim his near lapsed Lover, unto his devout Addresses as before, and make him see by such Assaults, that he can stand no longer in favour, then by his Grace supported: But he that is become a well-settled Regenerate man, so as to stand ever on his Guard, with holy courage to repell all approaches from Satan, as fast as they appear, will make such frequent Victories his chief delight; and when our common Enemy sees that all his attempts on such a man, are in vain, he will desist, who only watches opportunities for his attempts, on those he finds remiss; and who is often belyed

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by some men who do invite him to such easie Victories, on those of his own complexion, as black within, and as great Devils as himself.

CLXXII.

A Las poor man! dost thou complain because thou canst not sleep ten hours every night, when Nature doth require but five? Thou fearest to die! yet wouldst be dead near half the time thou hast to live; for sleep is so like death, that we cannot distinguish wherein they differ, until we awake. But thou art tired for want of entertainment in long Nights! Alas poor man, that is a sad grievance indeed, and worthy of pity; for thy Saintship has no sins to confess, nor pardon to ask of God, no cause to wash thy Bed with tears; Heaven, and Hell, with Eternity to come, are not worth thy thinking on, until the Bell toll thee to thy Grave; and then too late thou wilt wish for some of thy time lost in sleep, then to watch, and pray, and to lament in Sackcloth and Ashes. While the Regenerate man finds no time so fit to raise his Soul to Heaven,

as

as when he awakes at Mid-night; nor any consolation so great, as in those hours borrowed from sleep, to converse with God in holy Meditations; which fills his heart with present joy, and peace of conscience, that lasts the whole day after; and is a good remedy to prevent such fancies as do invade the drowsie Souls of lazie men, when they cannot sleep.

CLXXIII.

ARt thou fallen by a surprize! who has not, or may not fall so? But if these falls be frequent, there is much danger in such Relapses, and though not fit to cause despair, yet worthy of great care for the future; lest thy surprizes grow into a habit, and prove but an excuse, when thy self betrays thy self so often, which will find no credit at the day of Judgment, to procure a pardon from the Almighty searcher of our hearts; whose Omnipotence is affronted if we think by a trick to hide from Him; those crimes we are commanded to confess, bewail, and forsake.

CLXXIV.

WHen God gives us grace to make holy Vows for self-denials, with power to perform them, *He fails not (by his Holy Spirit) to assure us of his acceptance thereof,* by the joy our hearts will feel after every resistance of Satanical assaults, which will in little time encourage us to take more and more delight in those Victories over our selves, who are the greatest Enemies we have.

CLXXV.

IT is no easie work for men in health and prosperity, to think so often and seriously of Death, as is requisite for our preparation to the Grave, though no other time is so proper for it : For when pains and sickness do distract our minds, we are only diligent to seek remedies for cure, and often find none, but do die with a short prayer sigh'd out ; as if [*Lord have mercy on us*] were a charm to redeem threescore years mis-spent in sins and vanities, without any thought of our Salvation all that time ; as if
Heaven.

Heaven were too melancholly a business to trouble our idle heads with, while Youth in vigour reigns, which seldom affords any credit for the felicity of Piety, and such Romance discourses as they understand not; while a Righteous man knows no joy on Earth, like his expectation of Heaven, and living ever ready to die, in hope to be with God there.

CLXXVI.

WHen God endows the hearts of men with Holiness, it is a sure mark of his especial favour, to give us a free admission into the Court of Heaven, to be with Him there, as often as we please, in our Meditations; and if we can improve this Holiness, so as to become Divine Lovers of Him, we shall be admitted (as it were) into the Bed-chamber of the King of Kings, to enjoy all the Privileges and Immunities that His departed Saints have there. To know this, and to do thus, is to enjoy Heaven on Earth; in which felicity, the Atheist and the Hypocrite can have no share with a Divine Lover, who is ever ready to be snatch'd

up into Heaven, while he is meditating of his going thither.

CLXXVII.

IF we have joy in Earthly fruitions, what will our happiness in Heaven be! and if the hope only, and expectation of Heaven in pious hearts, be pleasure above all our enjoyments here, what transporting joy will the possession of Eternal Bliss be! when we shall see God, and participate of his glory as the Angels do; *and if we be so Regenerate as to believe this, and do take delight in such contemplations, it is a sure sign that the Holy Ghost is at work within us, and will beget such holy courage in our hearts, as to pass us through the Grave with chearful Souls to be with God. And if we love, and trust in Him as we ought, there can be no Diversions so delightful, as such Devotion is to a Divine Lover, who converses day and night with God, that is never absent from them who do sincerely delight in Him.*

CLXXVIII.

CLXXVIII.

WE are taught to pray against sudden death, that is, to perswade and lead us on to be always so prepared, that no kind of death may be too sudden, but that we (like *Eliab*) may every moment expect to be snatch'd up into Heaven by a fiery Chariot, or taken up in a flaming zeal of Divine Love, by an Apoplexy, or some other accident, of as quick an ascent as his Chariot was. But generally our mistake is, to pray for lingering long sickness, only to gain time for terrors to awake our sleepy Souls with sighs and tears, to move God to mercy then, which we valued not before: But the Regenerate man who has so cleared his accounts with God, at the Holy Sacrament, *as to have Christ new born within him, and is so led by the Holy Ghost as to sanctifie his future life*, that he lives ever ready, and willing to die: That man will find the most sudden death to be God's mercy, and a favour to free him from the Agonies of a tedious sickness; for we too often do mistake such sudden dissolutions, for God's Judgments,

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to see men fall so; when themselves feel a joy to be caught up into Heaven, without pain, to take possession of their Eternal Bliss. Now God grant that all men may be so well prepared for all kind of deaths, as none may be too sudden, for any who call on his Holy Name.

CLXXIX.

[*A Prayer.*]

O *Holy Ghost, Lord God the Comforter, who art never absent from those that desire thee with sincerity; vouchsafe, I beseech thee, so to enter my heart that I may find thee there, consecrating of it for thy Temple, by thy abode therein; and now direct me how to welcom so great a Guest, with gratitude and joy, for such Divine comforts, as flow in hearts where thou inhabitest, (and where Satan dwelt before.) Lord keep possession against Him, and all invading Enemies; for I cannot defend my self without Thy aid; nor of my self know when, or how to approach the Throne of Mercy, unless my Addresses be so guided, and so sanctified by Thee, as God will not reject them.*

CLXXX.

CLXXX.

[*A Prayer.*]

O Lord God, I beseech thee give me Grace to imploy the great fancy thou hast given me, on my greatest concern, to obtain thy Mercy and Grace, with Christs Righteousness, to work out my Salvation; that I may no longer mispend the time, which every moment hastens on to my Eternity; but with diligent zeal, to pray for Faith in Christ, such as will be the foundation for a Divine Life, to shew my love to Thee, my God, by an universal obedience, with purity, charity, and such humility, as will raise my heart unto the highest pitch of Divine Love; that my conversion may be now more eminent, then my crimes have been. And now, O God! I beg thy Grace to confirm, and fix my Soul in the assurance of my Reconciliation, and Adoption, by receiving the Holy Sacrament this day with such Faith, and due preparation, as to put off the Old man for ever. And so to eat, and drink the consecrated Bread and Wine, as the Body and Bloud of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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Christ, with all his benefits; as He himself gave himself to his Disciples here on Earth; *that I, now by thy Holy Spirit led, may like them, walk after Him.* And let thy mercy, O Lord! supply my defects, in the performance of this great Duty, according to the sincerity of my heart, entirely offer'd up to Thee, my God, in this days Sacrifice; so as the Records of my sins may be cancell'd in Heaven, and my Name be now writ in thy Book of Life, amongst thy reconciled Sons, on my Saviour Jesus Christ's account.

CLXXXI.

TO spend our time on idle thoughts, is like pursuing of vain waking Dreams; a folly so much less then nothing, that only Mad-mens fancies can delight in, and is a shame for sober men to imitate, whose Souls refin'd by Piety, may be ever on the wing towards Heaven, *filled with felicities above the reach of any worldly hearts to guess at,* which is the Pious man's continual entertainment, and delight; *so to pass his time with his Creator here on Earth, as to find his heart full of something so Divine, that*
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*he does think himself in Heaven, while that
Celestial flame enlightens him.*

CLXXXII.

Idleness is the fountain of all evil; the Devil directs his chief Emissaries on Earth, with Addresses to an idle person, who is then fit to take impressions from all sorts of temptations, when God is absent; 'tis such men that invite Satan to steal by degrees into their empty hearts in such disguises, as He well knows suits best with their idle fancies, so to divert them from all Holy purposes, with some Idea's of past delightful objects; *until they quite forget their sacred Vows to have God ever in their sight, which secure them from all such assaults.* And it is but a slight Argument, which many men use to excuse their time spent in idleness, because they want Learning, and the use of Books for their diversion; when all Ages shew, that Piety is not, nor ever was confined to Learning: 'Tis not our Wisdom, nor our Eloquence, *but our Faith and our sanctified affections, that is most acceptable to God;* and such sincere affections, will never want devout enter-

entertainment to keep our hearts so fixed on Heaven, and our concern there, as will baffle Satan with all his Arts, as often as He attacks us.

CLXXXIII.

TO be really contented, is an Epicurism, seldom thought on, and so far from being understood, as but little valued by the most of men, who are over-busie in labouring to change our conditions; still aiming to get what we have not, though the last acquisition rarely brings more satisfaction, then what we had before. Whereas a contented man, has all that he desires, and enjoys what he has, because allotted to him by the Divine Providence, who doth chuse better for those that do relie on Him, then we can for our selves.

CLXXXIV.

WE ought not to repine at crosses, nor to murmur at sickness, or any other affliction whatever, because they are God's Cordial Antidotes, to repell the poison of such sins, as He sees do use

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use to infect our Souls with malignant diseases, such as create a despairing conscience when we die, and hazard Eternal Torments in the next World; we are therefore to kiss the Rod that works so great a cure, and that Hand that smites us in Love, to make us fit for his Mercy, by repentance, and conversion from being great sinners, to become his Adopted Sons, and so above the venom of future biting afflictions; *for He only hath perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on God, the Rock of our Salvation.*

CLXXXV.

NO man can do all that he should do, but all men may do as much as they can do; and God requires no more, to obtain his Love here, and Salvation hereafter: But we are naturally so prone to flatter our selves in this point, that when we think our hearts most safe, we are often surprized by a forsaken sin, and shamefully subdued by it: For when we make a Covenant with our Eyes, and Hearts, not to go astray; though we cannot hinder the first look, or thought that is amiss, we may so check them at

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first appearance, as they shall not invade us a second time, nor bite on, to harm us; so that, if we do stumble heedlessly, we may prevent wilful tumbling into Relapses, and wallowing in them, for which there is no excuse.

CLXXXVI.

IT is worthy of observing, how some men by a long customed and settled habit of living ill, have so Naturalized their sins to themselves, and themselves to the Devil, as in time they grow to think it a point of honour and conscience, to be constant to that profession, and are ashamed to quit Satans black Livery, which they prefer before their first engagement to God in Baptism. I have heard a Gentleman say, that when he had lived many years in great Iniquities, it pleased God by a long sickness, to beget such remorse in his heart, as upon his recovery to become a Convert: But for a long time after, he did conceal this change, as ashamed to practise his conversion by a publick new course of life, (so much out of fashion) and did many times in conversation seem to like, what he

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he liked not, to avoid being thought an Hypocrite; until he consider'd how much greater a shame it was, to serve God in a corner, so to smother his highest Act of Mercy towards him, in not daring to own the thoughts of his Salvation; and how unworthy he was to become an Adopted Son of God, while he feared to declare his Hope of so high an Advancement: On which account, he did take courage to profess his Conversion, which he thought not fully to manifest until the hour of his death. By which we may see, how dangerous it is to run on in habitual sins, until we grow ashamed to forsake them.

CLXXXVII.

IT is a wonder to consider, that mankind should be so universally bred up from our Infancy to study, and by laborious callings to imploy our Talents of Sense and Reason, in the acquisition of such perishing goods, as the World affords; and generally so late begin to inform our selves of our Souls intrinsick value, being created for a participation of God's Glory, when ascended into

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Heaven; how unworthy an exchange then do we make, who believe this, and yet do violently labour for the short-liv'd vanities, (and indeed) the nothingness of this World, in comparison with Eternity, at the immense price of our Immortal Souls loss, and our Eternal joys in Heaven, for everlasting flames in Hell. And this, because we do not consider, that God did not make the World, to mock man with fallacious delights in the enjoyment of his Creatures, but intended it for our entertainment, and diversions in our Journey to Heaven; and therefore has given us rational Souls, such as by living virtuously, we may enjoy the World and Him together; and so advance our selves by gratitude, and love here, to a confirmation of a full fruition of Him at the Resurrection: Thus if we would sincerely study virtue, and set a true value on the perfection of Righteousness, we might enjoy this World with double pleasure, and have Heaven hereafter, with all its Glory also.

CLXXXVIII.

WE do mistake nothing in this World, more then our pleasures, which we do compell our fancies to comply in, and do often take more pains to justifie those vanities, then any delight we find in such short-liv'd fruitions: *Whereas if our hearts were set on God, and our Souls raised to serious thoughts of our Eternal Bliss;* such Divine entertainments, would grow to a continual feast, full of surprizing joys, and such Heavenly delights, that we should with pain suffer, and with remorse endure our vain diversions, and lament to see that our Nature does require such frequent relaxes from our most rarified, and ratified Devotions.

CLXXXIX.

WE cannot want Arguments for Meditation, if we call to mind our Christianity, that is, diligently examine if we do participate of Christs Righteousness, to such a degree, that our conversion from sin, and our natural cor-

ruptions, be changed into such an Evangelical habit of *Molinet*, *as to manifest our Spiritual Resurrection*, and Election to our own hearts; for then, nothing can engage us unto higher gratitude, and love, then a true sense of so great a benefit received, which when seriously considered, will mount up our Souls to frequent extasies of blessed Joy, by our devout approaches in Adoration of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, *who are all three always working us up to our Salvation*. Then which, nothing can be more worthy of our Meditation, and sincere examination, that we may be ready for the day of Judgment; which no man can be, that does not live so, as to be chearfully ready to die; for it is a much greater business to go out of the World, then to live in it.

CXC.

NO other man can cozen us so much, as we cozen our selves, in what we like; because we naturally raise fallacious reasonings, against true reason, to justify our unlawful desires; and do very easily perswade our selves to comply with our most idle fancies, and eagerest appetites,

rites, to what we know is against all Reason, and Religion too; thinking that our frailty is excuse enough, to follow our blind inclinations to evil; and do also indulge our aversion to goodness, on the same account, so long as our endeavours do prosper in wickedness. But when we are Thunder-struck by some surprizing affliction, then we can begin to think, and to find how much better, *and pleasanter it is to delight in God*, and by our utmost endeavours to improve that delight, by frequent and fervent Addresses, until we obtain new Celestial joys, which soon discard all our old Carnal fruitions, *by a constant fixing of our whole hearts on Heaven*; so as to be really offended at the most necessary diversions, *when they interrupt our Divine communication with Christ*, for the hastning on of our preparation towards that Eternal Glory he has purchased for us. Which is the most joyful expectation of a Regenerate man, who sees the difference between momentary Vanities, and everlasting Bliss; and sets him on fire to desire above all things, *to fix his heart on God*, and to delight in Holiness, as his supreme felicity on this side Heaven.

CXCI.

WHoever has the patience to read, and the Piety to practice these plain Lessons, (if he observe it) will find that his felicity does increase with his Devotion, and that his days will grow fuller and fuller of tranquility, in the midst of Worldly Storms, and feel them not. Let him also observe with what security he sleeps, with what joy he awakes at all hours to find his heart at work with God, before his Eyes are quite open, giving God thanks for all his Mercies, and above all the rest, for thus turning him from all his Iniquities before it be too late, that he might not trust unto the uncertain security of the best Death-bed Repentance; but to live and die so reconciled to God, as to manifest his pre-conversion, by a chearful Righteous life, and a joyful Resignation of his Soul unto Christ when he expires, will be joy indeed.

CXCII.

Judge not the serious looks of every pensive man, as if his heart were oppressed.

pressed with discontent; *who may that minute be conversing with God in Meditation, and triumphing over the Glories of this World, which thou enjoyest with all its delights, and which he may have had as high as mortal man can fancy fading happiness; But now, as tired with busie Crouds, and cloyed with glistering Vanities, He entertains his Soul with inward elevated joys, for so great a Victory over himself, which thou seest not; and dost therefore pity, or condemn, what thou wouldst admire, if clearly understood.*

CXCIII.

I*F the Spirit of Divine Meditation, were with sincere affection fully improved, by the diligent practice of raising our Souls as near to God, as our mortal fancies can reach; the Holy Ghost would at such times assist us with such increase of Piety, and such growing joys in our near approaches to the Throne of Mercy, as would shew us some bright Rays of that glorious Majesty we adore, to affect our Souls with such transporting thoughts, as would set our hearts on fire, with eager desires to be amongst those Angels that*

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that do attend on the Majesty of Heaven; *whose love and goodness, in mercy admits us Dust and Ashes, so to converse with Him, as a clear Testimony to our own hearts of our Adoption; by which pious practising to fix our affections on God, we shall so delight in Him, as now to conquer all those Imperious Appetites, that have so often conquer'd us; and may soon learn the Celestial Military Art, to subdue all temptations that assault us; and from their Ruines, raise fresh Trophies every day, most acceptable to God, and so beneficial to our selves, that we may discern our Souls mounting up to Heaven thereon.*

CXCIV.

WE ought to look on Death, as chief Goaler on Earth, God's prime Officer, by Him intrusted only with the custody of our imprison'd Bodies in the Grave, until the great Goal-delivery at the day of Judgment; when Death must deliver up our imprison'd Dust, at a moments warning, to meet our Souls at God's Tribunal; where his Office ends with Himself, who is then no more. So
that

that instead of quarrelling with Death, for doing of his duty, let us make peace, and get a Reconciliation with his great Master, that we be not lodged in Deaths Dungeon, amongst the impenitent Malefactors, but may be placed in his best Apartment, with the Reconciled sinners, *by God's Grace become Saints*, and pray that we may with them appear in their glorious Resurrection, with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CXC.V.

I That write my own thoughts only to review them, for my own satisfaction, must say again and again, that whoever seeks God with sincerity, will certainly find him, and shall find that he has found him : And though early seeking, and early finding be best, as most safe, because no man can promise himself one minute longer to seek God, then his first call to it; yet if he find favour to be called again, and be sent to work in God's Vineyard at the last hour of his day, and God see that he works then, with such vigour in that last hour, as if he would equal, or out-do, any that came in

in to work before him; the Lord of the Vineyard observes his endeavours, and rewards him equal with the first comers. (Though no man ought to trust unto a Death-bed Repentance on this Argument.)

Because the best Rule is, to remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth; the next best is, to remember Him in the time of full Manhood, in the strength and vigour of thy Age; but if not then, the next best is to remember him in thy Old Age, before thou hast quite forgot him, lest it be too late; for though it be late, and worst, yet then is not too late with God, if we answer whenever He calls, *He will give us Grace to do whatever he calls for.* And to give him then our whole hearts bathed in penitential tears, full of contrition for all past offences, he will accept them, and make us see that his Mercy has followed us, through all our wild insolent contempts of the highest nature, which aggravates repeated sins, after pardons upon pardons begged: So that when God doth not forsake, but follow and watch over such Reprobates, and does snatch them from the brink of destruction, it is to bring them to a Reconciliation,

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conciliation, and such a Resurrection from sin, as will support them for ever after by his Holy Spirit; which shews that his Mercy, and his Grace, are beyond the power of our sins to deface; for if our Repentance, and Contrition, be His own work within us, the operation of that Grace will testifie, that his Mercy endureth for ever.

Let no man then despair of Gods Mercy, or think it too late to repent, if he can forsake his Iniquities, so as for the future to love and serve God as he ought; for above all things, we must believe that God does abound in Mercy and Grace, more then we can do in sins; and that Jesus Christ is the Lord our Righteousness, and when we find that the Holy Ghost dwells so in our hearts, as to create an effectual application of God the Father, and the Sons work within us; we may comfort our selves with an humble assurance that all three, the whole Trinity together, have wrought this Salvation for our sick Souls; when restored to such health, and favour as to fall into no more desperate Relapses, after we come to a true sense, and shame for our dangers past, and such a joy for our escape, as becomes Rege-

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nerate men : And then, we shall know no felicity on Earth, that exceeds such an expectation of Heaven, as will fill the hearts of men endued with such transports from above. And this great Blessedness, the most illiterate man is as capable of, as the most Learned ; for God will be found, according to the sincerity of those that seek Him, not for their Abilities, or Qualities ; and Jesus Christ is ever as willing to be the Rock of our Salvation, as we can be desirous to build on Him, for our Foundation.

CXCVI.

WE do too often mistake Repentance, and abuse our selves with a belief that a few customary sighs, will blow our sins out of Gods remembrance, and his Judgments also from lighting on us ; but we shall find it far otherwise in the end : For if by the recollecting, and renouncing of our sins, with zealous confessing them to God, will not draw tears from our Eyes, we are to heighten our contrition, by a foresight and aggravation of such Eternal torments, as are due unto us from our incensed God, and to pray

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pray with vigorous sighs, and ardent groans instead of tears, until our hearts do melt within us, to express the sense we have of our offences, and by frequent repeating our indignation against our selves, with the greatest remorse we can raise our hearts to ; that so we may divert Gods Judgments, and convert them into Mercy and Grace, through our Faith in the Bloud of Christ, which only can wash all sins, and all sorrows for sin, from our hearts, and then fill our Souls with a joyful feeling of our Reconciliation : Thus by sincerity striving with our utmost endeavours to imitate, and to out-do the returning Prodigal, in our Repentance, we may be restored and welcomed into our Fathers house, and in his Arms find our Eternal Rest.

CXCVII.

W*Hen long habitual sinners are call'd to repentance by Grace from above,* so as to become fully reconciled to God, such men ought to give Glory unto his Holy Name, by some eminent way of expressing their gratitude for so great a blessing, and for ever after to live close

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up to Heaven, on the strength of their new Reconciliation, and in expectation that every moment they breath, may be their last puff of breath, which is Death; in which puff their Souls expire into everlasting Bliss: So that as often as they lye down to sleep, and when they awake to work, until they sleep again, they should (with all their worldly affairs) mingle devout reflections on the Mercies they have received; and feed on those Celestial Fruits which grow from their Divine Reconciliation, such as will keep them ever watchful, and ever ready for Gods call to their Eternal Rest, and make them joyful at their quickest passage thither. For sudden death, seems only uneasie and unsafe to lookers on, unto whom surprizes are most terrible, but can be none unto them who every minute do expect, what they know is every minute coming on, *and is most welcom to such Souls as the Holy Spirit dwells with*; by which sure marks of their Election, they are ever ready and desirous to be with God, which expectation is the highest felicity that man can have on Earth.

CXCVIII.

WE do generally flatter our selves with a belief that our chief aim is to be in Heaven, and to enjoy God there, while we fear nothing more then going thither; and it is because we do not seriously enough consider what it is to die, until the moment we are dying. And yet our tongues do talk so frequently of Death, as if we thought of nothing else; but such slight thoughts do vanish with those Airy discourses, and we as soon forget to prepare for what we were talking of; which makes so many men start back from the fruition of their highest wishes, and are frightened from taking possession of their Eternal happiness. And though dying chearfully be a Divine valour, above the reach of Dust and Ashes, *God doth ever support those that are his, with such a proportion of Holiness and Righteousness, for their Souls spiritual food and nourishment, as shall add courage unto all that desire to be with Him;* and they shall be so, the moment that they die; which is sufficient consolation, to invite men to live so piously, as to die chearfully.

-CXCIX-

THough no mans Piety can attain to the purity of Angels, until they become Angels; yet pious mens Evangelical Righteousness, *may be blessed with such a degree of Angelical Holiness, as to raise their Divine affections towards God so high, as to delight in Him, above all the glories of this World; and fix such a conversation in Heaven, as to be humbly assured of a joyful Resurrection to Glory, with Christ and his departed Saints; which is felicity enough to set mens ambitious hearts on cleansing, and purifying here, that they may become capable of so great honour and Eternal joy, as to have Angels places in Heaven when they die.*

C.C.

THough the Divine Mysteries of Heaven, and the Joys there, be Gods secrets, undiscernible by us; yet we are allowed to think that all things there, must be far more excellent then our highest fancies can reach; *and yet by the sanctified operations of the Holy Ghost,*
which

which we find in our own Souls, when inflamed with elevated zeal to God in our sincere Addresses, and when our hearts are engaged in Meditations above what any words can express; it is evident that those Seraphick joys, which are reserved until we see God face to face, must needs be infinitely more ravishing delightful, then what is revealed unto flesh and blood; so that it is no wonder if some men (who do believe this) do retire from the diverting affairs of this World, to entertain their Souls with such contemplations of Heaven, as may bring them unto a more frequent, and nearer conversation with God, when they have such a taste of those joys in Heaven, as no other man can gress at; unless by the same Light led! And then, such Meditations will be of great use, to prepare such men for a chearful departure out of this World for ever; which nothing can so well do, as an inward assurance from above, that they shall go to a better place for ever, and to better company for ever; and happy is that man, whose Soul is feasted here, with the thoughts of the joys in Heaven.

CCI.

Our Time is the greatest Treasure that we have; which we may call one way, well spent, when we give it, with our selves, to attend on Gods Vicegerents here on Earth; by his appointment to serve his Princes, and Himself together; and so may live eminent examples of virtue, and die with the credit of our time well spent, to shew others that Piety may grow in Courts, and prosper there.

Though it sometimes happens, that some men fail, and that some mens most lawful acquisitions by honest industry obtained, may be torn from them by Envy, and undue means, who may also undergo such severe censures as they deserve not, from the misguided tongues of malicious men, who see not the true cause of every Ruine, which often does proceed from Gods Justice for some concealed past sins, to punish us by such means, for such crimes as we have hid from men, but cannot hide from Him.

So that we may charge our punishment for sin, on the perverse nature of
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our own improvident selves, who do neglect the Redeeming of our mis-spent time while we may, and by Repentance obtain Gods pardon, on which depends our present happiness, with our future Eternal Bliss, or Eternal Woe, not enough thought on, to make us Redeem our time, in time.

And hereon we may with shame consider of, and guess at, what the fallen Angels would give, if they had whole Worlds to dispose of; what would they not do! how many thousand years with joy suffer the Torments they are in, to have the time (we value not) allowed them, to be admitted unto a possibility of repentance, and pardon, by Redeeming their mis-spent time, of their Rebellion in Heaven, before they fell from thence to Hell.

While we careless men, do pamper our vicious frailties, so as never to value the time we have, until it be gone beyond recall, until the despairing terrors of a Death-bed state do let us see that God in Justice gives us over unto perdition, because we would not Redeem our mis-spent time, and seek His Mercy, before the Evil day overtakes us; which

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we all know is every moment hasting on, ready to swallow us up into everlasting flames. But to such men as the terrors of Hell cannot fright, nor the joys of Heaven invite to Redeem their time, in-time, nothing more can be said, but *Lord have mercy on them*, who will not have mercy on themselves; for no misery can be greater, then when miserable men will not commiserate their own misery; but will hope from a Death-bed, to jump up into Heaven at once: But they will find the ascent too high, too steep, and too hard for those to climb up in such hast, who never learnt to know the right way thither.

CCII.

When a Soul is in fervent conference with God, about its Eternity, the Holy Ghost will be working that Soul up to see that Eternity, gives an addition of joy, to the joys in Heaven, and those joys do also increase the Glory of Eternity; all which Eternity, Joy, and Glory there, Christ has purchased for penitent sinners become Regenerate, and reconciled unto God, by Faith in his Blood; and as our pro-

proportions of Faith do increase, our desires will increase to be with God; as often as we dare remember that we must die, and are every moment dying.

Although we cannot attain to be inspired Prophets like *David*, nor reach the first Rank of Saints with *St. Paul*, we may become Penitents, and Divine Lovers in some degree like them; though not to shine so eminently on Earth as they did, yet we may follow their steps here, so as to share in the same Glory with them at the Resurrection, when converted reconciled sinners are invited to the same Eternal happiness, as the departed Saints enjoy there. And what can be more wish'd for to encourage us to live piously, and die chearfully, then to be with God in Glory?

CCIII.

WE should avoid many great crimes, if we could discern the deformity of sins, through the Devils gay Curtains always drawn close to hide them, until Death displays them in their true colours; which then will fright us into despair, at the sight of such grisly Aspects,

as we so joyfully embraced for prime felicities. But if we can learn the pious skill to draw such Curtains timely, those Fiends behind them will vanish on a full view, not able to endure the Test of such a discovery.

CCIV.

DId we believe Heaven to be, what Heaven is, we could not prefer this World before it; and if we did love God better than his Creatures, we should not forsake Him so often as we do, for them; and if we did think of Eternity as we ought, we should grudge every moment that diverts our hearts on trifles, when every minute may be our last here, and the next may crown us with Eternal Glory. *So that we should set our hearts to raise our thoughts on frequent, and full considerations of our Death-beds, and think seriously how the terrors of unrepented sins will bite then; and what a joyful passage our Souls will have, if reconciled before!* and then we should need no other Arguments than such thoughts, to persuade us to live so Righteously, as to be ever ready on the shortest summons, to step into that Eternity of Bliss.

CCV.

IT is said in Scripture, *that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*; which is a sure foundation to raise high structures on, by which we may climb to Heaven, in a constant conversation with our great Maker, in most delightful Addresses; for if we can by frequent practice, follow this Divine-guiding Light, we shall learn that Celestial Road so perfectly, that we may travel day and night safely, without mistaking of our way, or failing of our happy Rest at our Journeys end; which we shall more then guess at here, by the present joy we find in our way thither. And if we observe our sleeps also, our very Dreams will entertain our Souls with pleasure, above the reach of any waking fancies; and by all this, we shall certainly find something from above, that will beget a consolation in a purified heart, to testify that it is Gods work within us, who mocks no mans sincere ardent desires, with false hopes of a felicity he shall not find, for by a righteous life, and lively Faith, His improved Grace will bring our natural frailties to

die so chearfully, that we shall leave no pleasures behind us, so great, in this World, as we shall have by going out of it to Him.

CCVI.

A Dream of Heaven.

THough sleep Deaths Image be, I have been now

I know not where, convey'd I know not how !
Where something did appear so dazzling bright,

I could not see its Glory, for the Light :
My Soul surpriz'd with wonder, and amaze,
Methought I pray'd, and did forbear to gaze :

Frighted, and pleas'd, at what I lik'd, and fear'd,

I found it was a Dream of Heav'n appear'd,
Which waking fled ; but did my fancy fill
With bless'd Idea's, which abide there still :
With such transporting joy, that I can weep

To think of what I had, and could not keep :

CCVII.

HE that would improve the pleasure of Piety, is to consider how his Body does every moment descend towards the Grave; which will invite him to excite his Soul to mount much faster towards Heaven, by such a continual devout contest, which shall move fastest, *that he will grow to such a delightful zeal to God, that every step as he ascends, will raise his holy ambition higher and higher, with joy on joy, until his last puff of breath conveys his Soul into God's Eternal Glory; and all the way thither, will teach him to tread on the Thorns and Thistles of this World, as if he walked on Roses and Lillies, through the joyful expectation of his felicity at last.*

CCVIII.

A Divine Author says, That every man ought to be of some calling, that he may be of some use unto the State where God has made his station; for he that will be good for nothing in this World, is as nothing, and shall be

nothing in the next; he is but as an Excrement on Earth, none of Gods useful Creatures; so that to be of a lawful calling, and diligent in it, may expect a blessing from Heaven on his honest endeavours. And Princes whose calling is of a general concern, are set on Pyramids, that all the World may see and imitate their Virtues; Judges must be vigilant in doing Justice; great Commanders at Sea and Land, must be prudently, not rashly valiant; the Workman must work; the Courtier must wait; the Merchant must travel; the Preacher must teach; and the greatest Reprobate (if he becomes Regenerate!) has a great calling also; for he ought to declare his conversion, by his future life and conversation, that his Devotion may be more eminent than his Crimes were; so to manifest Gods mercy to himself, and by his example to shew others the way to Heaven: *So that no man should hide his Talent*, that can by any honest means improve it for the good of others. The Hypocrite is the only unhappy man this way, who will himself perish, though he do good by encouraging others to Piety by his example, who cannot discern the
Hypo-

Hypocrites counterfeit zeal, that travels through the Church of God, as his nearest way to Hell.

CCIX.

WHen we have repented our sins, and forsaken them, and received the Holy Sacrament, (which is the Seal of our Reconciliation) we are not to fright our selves with the memory of our forgotten crimes, but must express our gratitude, by recollecting and acknowledging the evils we have done, with the highest aggravation that we can; so to magnifie the free mercy of God, with Christs merits, for pardoning such great crimes; and then to comfort our hearts with the Gospel-consolations thereon. *So that no man ought to despair of a place in Heaven, that does sincerely endeavour to get in, when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are so active to bring us thither;* and yet we find it a very hard Lesson to learn to die chearfully, when the practice of our whole lives can seldom teach us in seventy years to be perfect in it when we die.

CCX.

L Et us not lament the long time we lye in Dust before the day of Judgment; for those who died six thousand years since, and we that die now, with them that die a thousand years after us, shall all awake the same moment at the Resurrection; and all this time shall be but as one moment divided amongst us all; for death, and sleep, distinguishes no time until we awake from both. So that we may reckon, that we shall be in *Abraham's Bosom* the moment we expire, though we shall not know what is meant by *Abraham's Bosom*, until we, with the departed Saints, arise from thence together.

CCXI.

HE that considers what Evils he has done, with all the aggravations belonging to such crimes, must needs be terror-struck at his hour of death, to think what great punishments are due to such innumerable offences so often repeated, if not reconciled unto God before

fore that time; (but if so bless'd) what comforts will that black Soul find! when by true Repentance, and Faith, he is washed white as Snow, by Christs Blood in the Sacrament; and purified into Adams first Innocence, and so be thus metamorphosed from a Devil, into an Adopted Son of God, by a blessed union with Christ, and filled with such serene joys as are beyond expression; and yet our frailties are such, that when we know this, and can do thus, we are still so subject unto Relapses, that we cannot stand in this happy station, a minute longer than by Gods Grace supported; to let us see, that we must not depend on our own Righteousness, but are to pray continually for Christs Righteousness to bring us to Heaven.

CCXII.

CHRIST said, *I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you*; he also said, *that if you ask any thing in my Name, I will do it*; these are two short Lessons of mighty consequence, for *what can man desire more then to be in God?* and *what can we wish for more, then to have what*

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we ask? and what can sinful man ask more, then forgiveness of all past sins, and Grace to sin no more? by Christ sending the Holy Ghost to sanctifie us, and to dwell with us for ever, and so to conduct us into Heaven when we die.

CCXIII.

WE ought to think often, and to rejoyce as often as we think, that the Holy Ghost is never absent from them that sincerely desire Him, and do give Him a warm welcom into a chearful heart; and he that can afford this Holy Spirit a full possession at his reception, may keep him ever there, and will always find that He is with him, by the operation of his Grace where He inhabits, still exciting him to love and delight in the Law of God, and empowering him by his Divine-guiding Light, to live after the Law of Righteousness, which will bring him to such a union with Christ here, as will assure his Eternal Rest with God in Glory at the Resurrection.

CCXIV,

CCXIV.

THough a lazie idle retired life, be not according to the Christian Rule, that says, no man is born only for himself, but is bound to imploy his Talent given to him, for Gods Glory, and the good of others; yet some men who have spent many years in the busie affairs of this World, with honest industry in their callings, may without a crime retire in their old Age, from the noise and hurry of business, and also quit those gaieties, which they find through a long custom, that their frailty cannot totally resist their participation of; and on that account may retire from such diversions as do disturb the full consideration, and preparation for their Eternal Being in the next World. By which retiring also, they may teach others to become *so Regenerate, as to find more felicity in private contemplations of Heaven*, then in all Earthly fruitions; which those that live in continual crouds, can hardly find time for.

CCXV.

CCXV.

IT is great Piety for a man in health, to live ever ready to die; but it is another kind of story, for a dying man to rejoyce that his hour is come to go to God, and to quit his share in all the glories of this World. So that we are often to contemplate this great point of Religion, and to practice on Deaths Image (sleep) every night when we lye down to Rest, that we may learn to compleat our preparation for that mighty work of dying chearfully, which is so much discour'd of, and so seldom seen, though our last Pangs do frequently seem to comply with what we cannot hinder; and nothing can more conduce to cure this natural frailty, *then setting our hearts to love the Law of God, and to shew it by word and deed, and holding a constant conversation with our Creator, in the daily raising of our Faith, and our affection to our Resurrection from Deaths Dominion, unto His everlasting Bliss in Heaven.*

CCXVI.

THERE is no felicity in this World, without a contented mind; and there can be no full contentment, without such a fixed dependance on God, as to be pleas'd with whatever He appoints, as best for us. Which Divine contentment, will raise our hearts to such a gratitude to God, with such a conversation in Heaven, as will beget an holy courage to contemn all the crosses, and all the allurements this World can afford; and this Spiritual contentment we ought to cherish, as Gods great favour, for us to delight in while we live, and to trust in when we die, as a mark of our Election; thus to divert us from longing after the perishing Glories of this World, that never can assure us any lasting contentment by their enjoyment, nor any comfort when we expire.

CCXVII.

HE that writes Devotion, walks on a narrow Plank with Precipices on either side, and is in danger to slip into the

the Gulf of Spiritual Pride on his own Righteousness, or else in too much humility for his own unworthiness, may presume to think, that some things from the Holy Ghost informs him with Evangelical Rapsodies, when his Soul soars so high towards Heaven. So that in our best Actions, we are with humble and grateful hearts, to give the honour and the glory unto God, for all that we do well.

CCXVIII.

TO love God, and to be beloved of God, is an immense Meditation; which by practice, must needs improve our Interest in Heaven: for when God sees our Souls set to seek him this way, He will send his Holy Spirit to raise our ambitions higher and higher, to gain his favour, in hope of such an union with Christ, as our nature is capable of; by which such elevated enlightned hearts will find a felicity on Earth, that no mans thoughts can guess at, that does not feel it, with a joyful assurance of being received into Heaven when he dies; so that we cannot have a better Argument to invite us to live Piously, and to die cheerfully,

fully, then to love God thus; for the true joy of a good Soul in this World, is the very joy of Heaven, which Death shall not take away, nor interrupt it one moment.

CCXIX.

WE may do well to observe *David's* method in his Victory over his sins, when they were his declared Enemies: He did not retire from his charge and calling, to hide himself from their assaulting temptations, but forced them to fly from him; and pursued them so, as they might never be able to return upon him. And having thus vanquished, and discarded all those his old Companions, when he perceived them to be his Enemies; He soon became a man after Gods own heart, and then found that he had strength, company, power, joy, wealth, and honour enough in God alone, with whom he spent the most of his time after, in Prayers and in Praises. So that as He did, we should discard our old evil habits, and all our old Companions, (workers of Iniquity) and make them fly from us, as *David* did, and then we shall find all
 T those

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those joys in our conversation with God,
which *David* had.

CCXX.

D*avid* says, that *God* heard the voice
of his weeping; which shews that
the sighs and tears of penitent sinners,
are heard in Heaven without words, and
that devout tears which cannot speak,
do speak aloud in Gods ears; nay, when
we desire to weep, but cannot pour out
tears themselves, (*Doctor Duane* says)
that *God* sees tears in the hearts of men,
before they blubber on their faces; and
He is said to hear the tears of a sorrow-
ful Soul, which for sorrow cannot shed
a tear; the very lifting up our Eyes to
God, in a sincere sorrow, opens Him win-
dows, through which He sees a wet heart
through the driest Eyes; and by his re-
turns of Grace, gives comforts, with the
blessed peace of a quiet conscience, to
assure our Reconciliation unto Him;
that we may with chearful hearts ex-
pect Deaths summons unto our Eternal
Rest in Heaven.

CCXXI.

CCXXI

THe supine *Epicure*, the practical Atheist, and the divine Hypocrite have gained so great a Vogue in some parts of the World, as hath almost worn true Christian Religion out of Fashion, and out of Countenance too; while those are thought ill-bred men that practice any Piety; and none so well accomplish'd as they who have those three eminent Vertues in most perfection, which do very often dwell together in such careless Hearts, as do not at all consider, or not enough examine their integrity towards God.

CCXXII.

VE do generally wonder at, and pity the Melancholy Lives of some devout Hermits, who are retir'd into desolate Habitations from the converse of Men: But do not consider the blessed contentment which their Souls enjoy in a conversation with God, as if themselves were then in Heaven; with such an ambitious Zeal, as fills their
Hearts

Hearts with Happiness, and holds up their Souls so fixed on Christ, as to despise all the Glories of this World. So that we ought not to pity those happy men, but to look on them as Divine Objects, fit for our devout Envy and imitation, who do enjoy felicities above the reach of Earthly minds to judge of. But yet every pious man, that can give his whole Heart to God, needs not give his whole time too (for we are required to serve God more waies than one,) and may convert our Closets into Cells, where we may be sure to find God as often as we desire to meet him there; as well as on the tops of Rocks, who will not be confin'd to time, or place, that is ever with us every where. So that the Mountain Hermit, and the City Hermit, may have Spiritual entertainments, and comforts alike, while they Live, and may Die with as high delight to be with God; and may shine equally as bright in Heaven, when they meet there.

CCXXI.

LET us redeem the time we have mis-
spent, while we have time to do it,
by making ready for our summons to the
Grave, as our prime business here; and
when God sees our hearts are fully fixed
on Him, He will guide and conduct us
through the dark rugged paths of Death;
by the bright consolations of his Holy
Spirit, to entertain us with comfort and
delight, in our passage unto His Eternal
Rest. Let us then set our Souls joy on
this great work, and observe how Gods
Grace, and our felicity does increase to-
gether, upon the remission of all our sins,
and Reconciliation to God.

CCXXII.

AN habitual sinner that perseveres in
his wickedness unto the end of his
days, seems to think that his Baptismal
Vow was to serve the World, the Flesh,
and the Devil, and to forsake God and all
his Commandments.

CCXXIII.

IT is not to be thought that any man can die chearfully, that does not believe he is then going to God; and no man can believe that he is then going to God, but he that loves God, and fears to offend Him: so that he only can be truly happy here, who can so fix his heart on God, as to find that his highest Happiness in this World, is in preparing to go out of it; but most men in health, are too apt to think themselves ever ready to die, and do not find that they are not, until the Bell tolls them to their Grave.

CCXXIV.

IF there be one sin more predominant then all the rest, that by its frequent Victories over thy frail Nature, is now grown too strong for thy controul; stand always on thy Guard hereafter, to watch its first Assault, and be so well Arm'd against surprizes, as to have time to call in Aid from Heaven, to assist when such an Usurping Enemy appears, as thy own strength cannot resist: But let not thy
new

new courage fail, fight bravely on to thy last gasp, and rather die then yield ; never submit, never comply with such a known Enemy ; for when it cannot compel thee to consent, as formerly, 'twill quit the Field, asham'd to be so baffled by its Slave, so frequently subdued before. And thus by a stout resistance, thou wilt find inward unseen Aids, to humble that Triumphant sin, that has so often Tyrannized over thee.

CCXXV.

TO die, while we are dying, is not strange ;
*But to be so unwilling to exchange
 Our anxious days, in a distracted time,
 For an Eternal Rest, and joy sublime,
 Is want of Faith, or value for our God,
 To shun his presence, and embrace his Rod :
 Pretend to Heav'n, but still do from it fly,
 Because we will not, dare not learn to dye ;
 Though we can only when our Souls expire,
 Obtain long life, which we so much desire.
 Could we divide a moment to the Eye,
 We should see Life, the moment that we dye ;
 And Faith does fully that defect supply,
 For though my Body dies, it is not I.*

CCXXVI

POSTSCRIPT.

THe conceal'd Author, doubting that he may be too soon known, does think fit to make some Apology for exposing so many loose Lines unto the censure of the World; and does only hope, that all good men will in charity look on his *Mid-night Thoughts*, as rough Oar found in a rich Golden Mine, from which they may wash away the Soil, and lay up the pure Gold for use.

F. I. N. I. S.

CCXXVII

NO man can guess at the felicity of holy Meditations but those who constantly converse with God that way; and who have obtained grace to be admired at all times to such near approaches, that their souls seem to be entertained amongst the Angels in Gods presence, while those Divine Addresses last; by which God also seems to manifest his Mercy unto the souls of men, in shewing them some glimps of that Eternal glory they shall share in at the Resurrection; to fill our hearts with blessed Ideas of his Celestial Joyes.

CCXXVIII

HE that would know true joy on Earth must secure his Eternal Bliss unto his own heart; not only by confessing, bewailing, and forsaking his known sins in hope of pardon; but must express his Love to God, and his gratitude for that pardon; with a true value of it, by improving his peace of conscience thereon with a Continual Conversation in Heaven for the future; and thereby raising his soul to such a delightful

ful Love of God, as to find that the prime entertainement of his heart, is to be so retired with his Creator and Redeemer, that he may observe how the Holy Ghost is ever present with them to improve his delight in them, unto as high joy as man is capable of on this side of Heaven: And whoever can obtain grace, thus to make his Devotion his prime pleasure on Earth, will perceive a new kind of felicity, by such an exaltation in his soul as will raise his affection to God above all other Divisions. And then, if such Meditations do shew him such a prospect of his Eternal Bliss, as doth create a Faithful expectation of Heaven so delightful here; He may presume that he shall not want Divine Valour to die cheerfully, when he is called to take possession of that glorious purchase which Christ had made for him there.

CCXIX.

IT is worthy of observation, and our most serious Meditations, to see how much all men of all humors, and all conditions, Young and Old, are generally of one mind in our great Journey through this world; Where we are humbled to-
ge-

gether, and tossed, and tumbled in
rough rugged ways up and down steep
Hills, full of hopes and fears, still enter-
tained with more storms than shin-
shine, and never free from such dangers,
as do fill most mens hearts with unquiet
thoughts through their own Journey;
though some good men well Armed,
can smile, and sleep it out with patience,
while others sighing, groan and weep
the whole way through. And too ma-
ny there be in this great *Caravan*, who
Laugh and sing, and merrily pass their
whole time without a thought of whe-
ther they are going, until their turn
comes to be tumbled out into the Pit,
with as little regard as they went this
ther. But almost all, are all the way
of the same mind, to Linger on in their
uneasie passage, rather than once hearti-
ly to wish to see their Journeys end;
and very few there are, that do enter-
tain any joyful thoughts of their arrival
there at Last; So that till Time by Day
and Night, of course transports them
thither; though tied and Cripled by
various hardships in their long travels,
very many do wish they might return
the rugged way they came; to endure a

another age of sorrows, pains, and troubles, rather than to alight from their Worn-out Waggon, to rest a while in their own Homes, though they know there is no other way to pass unto Eternal Bliss. But when they find the wheels, and Axel-trees that bore them up, do crack under their heavy burdens, past all hope to carry them any longer on; then to late, they flatter themselves with vain hopes to flatter God, as if they did desire to be with Him; When they do know that God doth see, that nothing could by them be done, to keep them longer from Him. For which great frailty in Mankind, the only sure cure is, to think of, and prepare for our journey's End; all the way we travel thither; And then the expectation of that joy, and that Glory we march towards, will sweeten all we suffer on our way to God. And happy are those men, that can obtain grace to travel so to Heaven, as to get such a taste of those Celestial joys in their way thither, as will make their hearts glad to think they shall Arrive, where they are to Rest for ever in peace, and Glory.

CCXXX.

IF we believe Charity to be a prime Christian Duty; to relieve the Poor by our purses, and by our good counsel, and vertuous lives, to reform sinners, How great an offence is it! for Christians to oppress their Neighbors, by unjust power, and to seduce others unto evil actions, or to defame, and scandalize the most Innocent on any design, or for envy; and in general to be more eminently wicked than Heathens; as if we strove in emulation to out-do the Devil in Malice and rapine, to shew how we can defye all Christian principles, that should lead us unto our salvation.

CCXXXI.

HE who truly loves, desires to be much with his beloved; and if God be that object of his hearts delight, he will desire to be ever with him, and may assuredly have what he so desires, by raising his soul in frequent Meditations unto the Divine Presence, where God will sometimes admit of his transported

ported elevated affection in prayer, to some degree of his Celestial Bliss; and will sometimes send down his Holy Spirit, to sanctify his heart with such growing comforts there, as will consecrate that to be his Temple, where he will abide so long as he finds a sincere welcome, with a total resignation unto Him. And this Divine felicity, this pre-possession of Heaven, this holy conversation with God; will invite such a man unto continual ambitious endeavors to get nearer, and nearer with delight, towards his entering into the eternal joy of his beloved. And by such a dayly practice, he will find his heart so fill'd with grace, and so Armed with Holy courage, as to be always ready to die Cheerfully; which is our only way to shew our love, and our desire to be with God. And is the chief business that we were born for; and when rightly understood, is the supremest pleasure we can have on Earth, in our way to heaven, to be ever so ready for our summons thither, that no crosses, losses, or afflictions in this world, nor all the glories therein, shall be able to give us any interruption in our journey thither.

CCXXXII.

IT may sometimes be useful in our Meditations, to compare small concerns with greater, and so to set our frequent troubles opposite unto our delights in this world; and then to Judge ingeniously between them; and if our joyes do weigh down the scales; then to re-weigh those joyes below, with the joy and glory above; that when we are most Laden with wealth and honors, most elevated with the smiles and favours of great Princes here; then to raise our souls unto a holy emulation with the Saints in Heaven, for Gods favor there; as our supream felicity, which will creat such a purity of heart within us, as will be more constantly delightful, than all this world can give us; And by such a Resurrection from earthly pleasures, to long after the next worlds everlasting joys, will fix our affections on that eternal Bliss, with a Divine transporting joy, to foresee that glory we shall find, when our present we expire.

CCXXIII.

A Regenerate Mans frequent devout Meditations, do raise in him a delight to converse so with God, and doth increase that delight, unto the most immense joys, that the soul of man can reach on earth. It is like the adding of Ciphers to a former sum, payable from a Banck of treasure that can never be exhausted; but the more we multiply that score, the more we may; and the greater our account grows this way, the surer will our payment be; by fast linking our earthly joyes, unto the everlasting chain of Joys in Heaven.

F I N I S.

ERRATA

PAge 9. l. 12. r. *will so fill it*, p. 10. l. 17.
induced r. *endued*, p. 14. l. 9. the
r. *there*, p. 25. l. 9. mark r. *work*, p. 26.
l. 12. times r. *Aims*, p. 47. l. 8. concealed
r. *cancelled*, p. 49. l. 11. r. *without*. p. 150.
l. 13. r. *despair*, p. 151. l. 19. of r. *our*,
p. 155. l. 7. r. *marks they wear*.